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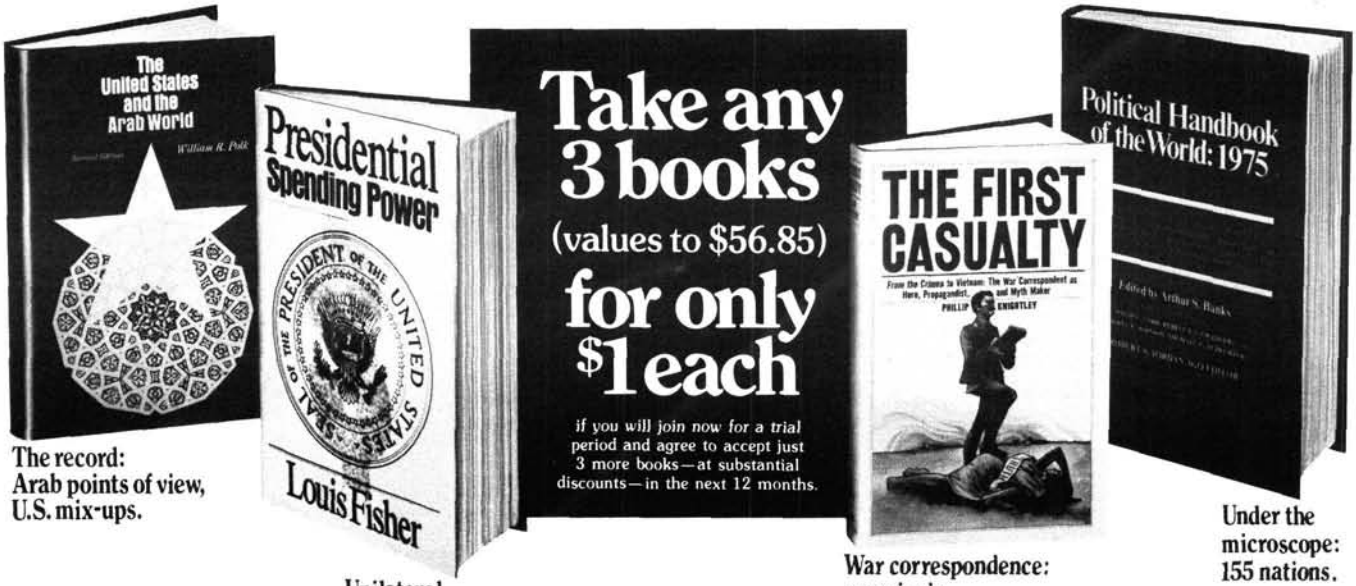
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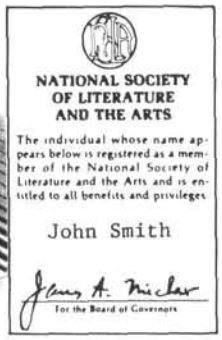
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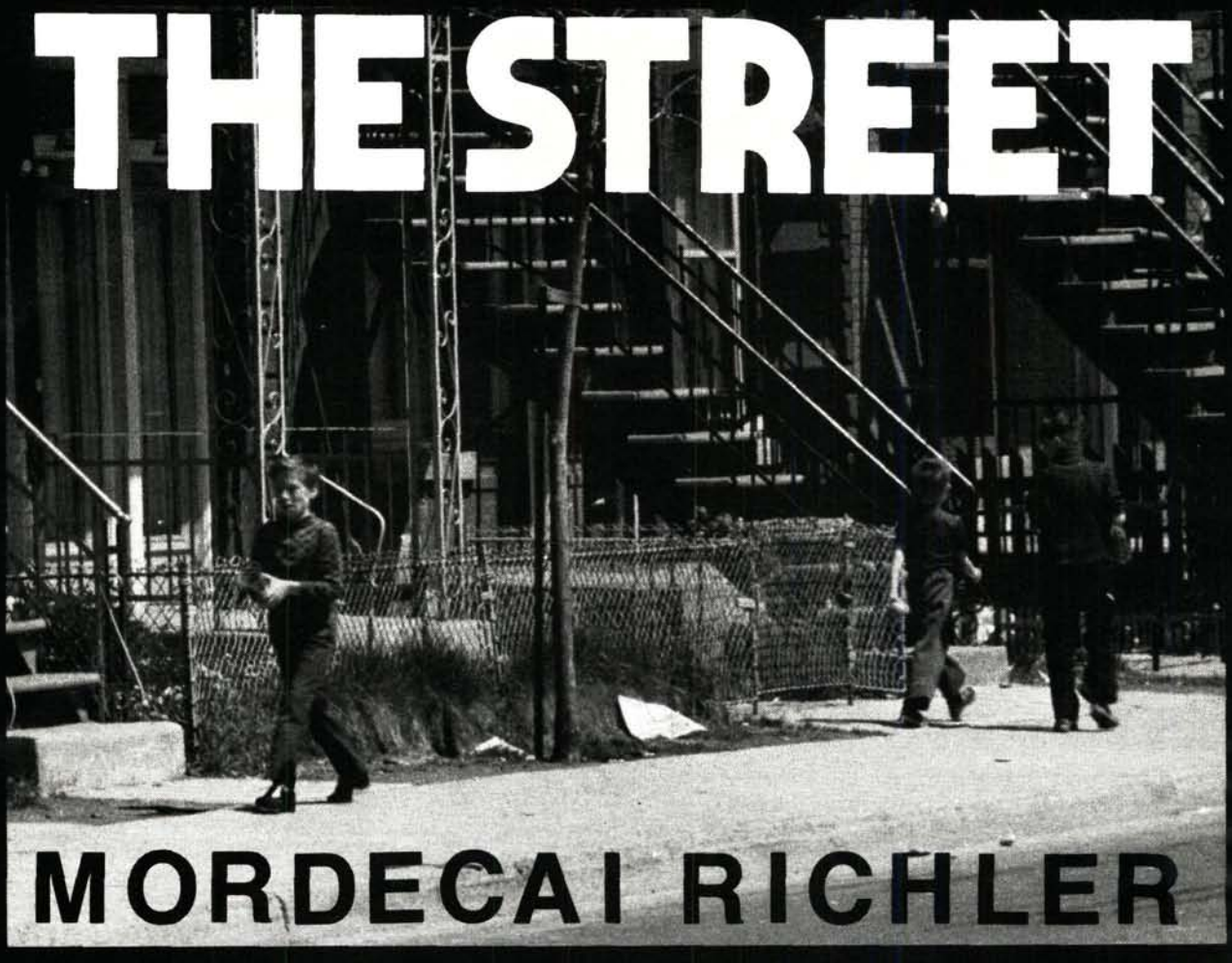

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Contents

7 Comment
Keeping Out Concorde,
Bloodletting Blood Brothers

9 Three Ghosts: Nixon, Agnew, Calley
—*Herbert Mitgang*

10 Sargent Shriver—*Paul R. Wieck*

13 The Perils of Polling—*Ken Bode*

17 The Great Foreign Policy Debate We Ought to Be Having—*Richard J. Barnet*

22 Boston Desegregation—*Joseph Featherstone*

28 Theater—*Stanley Kauffmann*

29 On Modernism—*Alfred Kazin*

31 Books—Reviews by *Harry Levin, James Atlas, Alan Weinblatt, Reed Whittemore, Catharine Hughes, Harry T. Moore*

40 Reconsideration: Edmund Wilson's *Memoirs of Hecate County*—*John Updike*

41 Correspondence

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Keeping Out Concorde

British and French aviation officials came to Washington last week to defend their graceful albatross, the Concorde supersonic jet, to an audience of skeptical Americans. The occasion for the visit was a special day-long hearing called by the US Secretary of Transportation, William Coleman, Jr. He asked all concerned to come before him and present arguments for and against the Concorde, after which, he said, he would deliberate for a month and then decide whether or not to let the plane land at US airports. His decision, due on February 4, could make or break the Anglo-French venture.

Though Coleman himself was congenial, not many others in the hearing room had much kind to say about the jet. Even the politicians who usually vote for extravagant military aircraft were unenthusiastic. True, Barry Goldwater, a senator who loves airplanes for their own sake, appeared and gave the Concorde his blessing. But his colleague, the conservative senator from New York, James Buckley, whose constituents would have to endure Concorde's comings and goings at Kennedy airport, spoke against it. Another New Yorker, Republican Rep. Norman Lent, gave an evangelist's warning against the foreign demon: "We must erect a permanent legislative barrier against these monstrous aircraft," Lent said. There was of course another side; the members of the Anglo-French team tried to whip up an equally impassioned case. They chided the US for turning its back on the technological future. They said Americans were ignoring the fundamental rule of modern air commerce—that all countries must accommodate their friends' aircraft, however bizarre they may seem. They even hinted that economic reprisals might be taken against American companies. But for all their bravado, the foreigners were clearly outgunned, and they felt it.

The trouble with the Concorde is that in almost every category it does the opposite of what a modern airplane ought to do. It uses more fuel than conventional jets and carries fewer passengers. It makes more noise. It pollutes more. It costs more to run and to ride on. Its only good quality is that it can travel from New York to London faster than the ordinary jet—in about three and a half hours instead of seven. But is this speed worth all the other costs? When Congress discussed the question several years ago, it decided the answer was no, and refused to join the British-French fad for building supersonic

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passenger jets. It seemed a bad idea then, and even worse now. Far from being the plane of the future, as its builders claim, the Concorde is a thing resurrected from the past.

The makers of Concorde obviously cannot accept the thought that they are peddling an anachronism. They put three billion dollars into the project, and the best chance for recovering some of this investment is to deploy the planes on the most profitable trans-Atlantic routes. It is critically important to the investors that they be allowed to tap the rich American market of tourists, diplomats and corporate envoys. Therefore they hope to persuade the Americans that it's not just civility but international honor that requires them to let Concordes land on US soil. How else will America's old allies make back their bad investment?

The Anglo-French promoters of Concorde, speaking at the public hearing last week, suggested that the cost in terms of increased annoyance and pollution would be negligible. The kindest thing that can be said about this is that they selected their facts carefully. The United States' own Environmental Protection Agency—which recommended that Concorde *not* be allowed to land—gave a more objective report. It was almost too objective. Roger Strelow, speaking for the EPA, pointed out that the Concorde violates both noise and air pollution standards for jets now flying in the US, that its introduction here would run counter to America's energy and environmental policies and that it would be very hard to limit flights entering the US once the first one is let in.

The most intriguing part of Strelow's testimony was his description of the Concorde's unique low frequency roar. This passage is exquisite in its restraint and bureaucratic caution and must be read closely to be appreciated. "The low frequency character of Concorde noise," Strelow said, ". . .enables the noise to penetrate dwelling units more effectively than the noise from other jet aircraft. The intensified amount of annoyance generally experienced by people when indoors rather than outdoors, presumably due to the fact that the various human activities that are particularly noise-sensitive and may be easily disrupted, *e.g.*, speech communication, mental concentration, relaxation, are more demanding and important to people indoors." And again: "House rattle, which is expected to be apparent to some extent around Kennedy and Dulles airports when the Concorde is taking off, is, in fact, one of the most annoying and undesirable features of aircraft noise. The high degree of annoyance due to house rattle may be attributed to both psychological fear of a possible aircraft crash, and concern of possible damage to fragile personal possessions." House rattle? Damage to personal possessions? Strelow continued in this vein, pausing briefly to make a tentative political observation: "Because of likely Concorde noise-induced house rattling, fear may be associated with the noise. Because those persons who are exposed daily to Concorde noise will [not] directly receive any benefits from supersonic transport, residents may question the importance or necessity of the additional noise source. Finally, because people will tend to feel that the noise is preventable, some persons may feel intuitively that those responsible for the noise are not concerned about the well-being of those affected by the noise." Indeed they may.

Although it hasn't been presented as such, what the makers of the Concorde really ask is that their plane be given a long-term exemption from the noise and air pollution laws that apply to other airplanes. In 1973 the EPA promulgated standards for jet exhaust for all planes in the US, and since then it has been trying to have dirty engines "retrofitted"—at considerable expense to the owners—to comply with these standards. If the Concorde is allowed to operate in this country, it will not only make the EPA look foolish, but it ought to provoke a hornets' nest of lawsuits. Indeed why should the owners of slow but clean American planes be forced to overhaul their engines if the Concorde, which is far dirtier than anything now in the air, is invited to enter the market? The same applies to noise pollution.

Finally we should consider what might be fair compensation for the people who live near Kennedy and Dulles airports and who may have to listen to the Concorde's roar. If Secretary Coleman decides to relieve them of some of the sanity and clean air they now enjoy, what will he give them in return? Surely there will have to be a *quid pro quo*, for no one will voluntarily endure house rattle. The easy way out would be to ban the machine, but Coleman is said to be leaning in the other direction. So if it is really important to let the Concorde in, then its owners should be required to make some recompense to any citizen whose life has been made more miserable by it. An appropriate gift might be a free, one-way trip, via Concorde, to any place in the world he would rather be.

Bloodletting Blood Brothers

There may be no end to the fatuous rationalizations that can be mustered for one country's interventions in the affairs of another. Over the years the State Department must have trotted out just about every one of them. At year's end, however, our exhausted editorial colleagues at the labor-troubled *Washington Post* came up with a new one—not in support of Kissinger's flailing efforts to affect the outcome of the Angolan civil war but to justify Cuba's direct and massive involvement in that tragic conflict in southern Africa.

"For the *Post*'s part, we oppose all foreign intervention in Angola," is how the ritual disavowal about outside pressures is put. "But," the editorial continues,

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"Cuba can at least make the claim on solid racial grounds (as Fidel Castro just has) that the blood of Africa 'runs abundantly throughout our veins . . . we are not only a Latin American country, we are a Latin-African country.'" In testimony before Congress, not one of Kissinger's minions, not even the very inventive Secretary himself had thought of that one as a reason for anybody's involvement in Angola. The blood of Africa, after all, also runs abundantly through American veins. What would Kay Graham's editorial writers do with that as a reason for sending US troops to Luanda? Or for that matter, just arms? Or maybe merely money?

The argument from blood has all sorts of possibilities in international politics. Given the ample Cuban blood that has run through our veins in Miami for 10 or 15 years, the argument would support the kind of squalid American intervention against Cuba that was Eisenhower's and Kennedy's way of dealing with a regime they didn't much like. And as for involvement in the bloody Irish turmoils, present and yet to come, there would be almost no argument for abstention, from either side. How many million Chinese-Americans would it take to give retrospective sanction to American attempts aimed at stopping the Communist revolution in China? In continental Europe, moreover, there is hardly a country (certainly not in Eastern or Southern Europe, where troubles are not and will not in the future be strange to history) for which a US President could not reach into the melting pot for a reason to make the political business of others forcefully our own. What Castro said in defending his African adventure is nonsense, and for the *Post* to give it credence is nonsense too.

Nixon, Agnew, Calley

Three Ghosts

Three desperate symbols of the past that refuse to die—Richard M. Nixon, Spiro T. Agnew and former Lt. William Calley—will reappear in 1976. Peas in a pod of war and corruption, they are linked by the crimes they committed and the wounds they inflicted on the dream of American morality in military and public life. Their ghosts will become presences during the presidential election year.

Nixon, Agnew and Calley will come back to rewrite their personal felonies into mere misunderstandings, to fabricate their records on television and in memoirs (and, what is more, get paid for it), to try to leave the impression that it was all political and, anyway, all started a few Presidents ago. In their attempt to make forgetfulness next to godliness, they will be aided by a retinue of former flacks and spear carriers who have their own records to cleanse and their own tales to peddle. Against these will be marshaled factual and historical interpretations of the Watergate story by such solid journalists as Jonathan Schell and Elizabeth Drew; but their books, coming after foretastes in *The New Yorker*, can hardly be expected to have the widespread impact of the first Nixon broadcast.

The cosmetic game has already begun. In a remarkable interview in the Christmas issue of *The Ladies Home Journal*—remarkable for its lobbed questions and batty answers—Nixon advertised himself as a spokesman for American behavior. (He was allowed to censor parts of the interview before it was printed between the ads for Purina "Meow Mix" for cats and the Ayds weight-loss plan for fatties.) With straight face, Nixon declared, "We are so cynical, so disbelieving—it may take the shock of an invasion—in Korea or in Thailand. If American lives are threatened, we may regain our sense of belief in our country and our need for strength. We are a compromised country at the moment."

Apparently Nixon does not yet realize that *he* was the prime cause of cynicism and disbelief in government. After perpetuating the Vietnam war for four years, leaving blood and bombs on the land, the ex-President incredibly proposes new Vietnams to give Americans spine. Nor does he feel a need to restrain his pensioned tongue on foreign affairs even when his views may conflict with evolving government policies. After Franco's death, he issued a statement saying that the dictator who had once sided with Nazi Germany "unified a divided nation through a policy of firmness and fairness toward those who had fought against him." This, while Madrid's political prisoners still languished in jails.

For his future disclosures, Nixon has erected a double standard. When the Senate Intelligence Committee asked him to provide information, he immediately tried to negotiate ground rules that included not testifying under oath and exercising executive privilege. As a result of these impossible barriers to truthful testimony, the committee turned him down altogether. But for David Frost, who is packaging Nixon's television appearances for hundreds of thousands of dollars, a source familiar with their private deal discloses that he told the British showman: "You give me confidentiality and I'll give you candor." Secrecy and furtiveness remain the Nixon watchwords.

That other famous moralist, ex-Vice President Agnew, also sees flaws in the American character. And so he is sponsoring a foundation designed "to promote, encourage and support the development of public understanding and appreciation of the advantages of a democratic society." It makes a kind of demonic sense: he got his, and still managed to plea-bargain his way out of jail. Agnew is now going around the nation and the world, selling anyone's goods and the line that the federal government's case against him for bribery, tax

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evasion, etc., rested entirely on testimony of people trying to save their own necks.

Perhaps a shade of truth will emerge in Agnew's novel, *The Canfield Decision*, coming from Playboy Press in the spring. In it, boy Vice President falls in love with girl HEW Secretary. "She was a forbidden chocolate candy—one he found more and more difficult to resist," an early version of the book went, though it seems unnecessary to improve as Washington literature. Then the fictional Vice President delivers his clincher: "In situations like this, where there's just the two of us, couldn't we forget the formal title and just make it Newt—the way it was that last night in Minneapolis?"

The sad Calley, who was convicted of murdering 22 civilians at My Lai, remains free—as do his untried superiors up the military chain of command. He tools around Georgia in his Mercedes-Benz, in contrast to those who resisted taking up arms and remain underground in their own country or abroad. Occasionally he hits the lecture trail along the Southern rim, receiving a fat fee for giving his singular version of the Rules of War. Calley also wishes to teach Americans how to live and vote in 1976. He has volunteered to help the Wallace presidential campaign. The governor took his name, rank and serial number but little else; it was an offer Wallace found he could refuse.

Calley's appeal from a court-martial is expected to be taken up by the United States Supreme Court this year on grounds of a claim of prejudicial pretrial publicity. But the army is not expected to put him behind bars regardless of the outcome. The former lieutenant and the former President are kin by war and political necessity. The tone of leniency and coverup of My Lai was set in the White House by Nixon—"in my role as Commander-in-Chief"—who changed Calley's confinement to cushy house arrest because it was expedient.

Accidents of time, place and policy link the names. Calley—the single name recalled in Vietnam's best-known massacre while his commanders are unremembered and unconvicted. Agnew—drummer and boy novelist, who can now lecture us on justice and freedom because all the government parties colluded to let him plead no contest and conceal his crookedness. And Nixon—who was allowed to resign on the eve of formal constitutional indictment, leaving a presumption of innocence that was ratified by his hand-picked successor's pardon. Despite the coming resurrection in videoland, the failure to impeach and let the whole truth out means that the books can never close on the Nixon presidency's crimes. Because of Mr. Ford's worst mistake, the country has turned the calendar into a presidential year under a cloud of deception, haunted by unfinished business in its own house.

Herbert Mitgang

Mr. Mitgang is a member of *The New York Times* Editorial Board.

Sargent Shriver

The Inlaw

On an early morning flight in the fall of 1972, an aide handed R. Sargent Shriver the morning paper, which had a story in it about his campaign appearance the previous night. The press account identified him not only as the Democratic vice presidential nominee but as "the brother-in-law" of Ted Kennedy. When he saw that, Shriver dropped the paper to his lap. "I used to be Jack Kennedy's brother-in-law. Now I'm Ted Kennedy's brother-in-law. I suppose in 20 years I'll be the uncle of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr." Now, three years later, he is boldly laying claim to the "legacy" of his famous in-laws in his campaign to become the Democrats' nominee for President.

The main problem with this strategy is that Shriver isn't a Kennedy. And this isn't 1960, it's 1976.

Shriver's assets, and he has some, reflect more the superficial aspects of Camelot, the style and grace the public loved after the votes were counted, the sense of motion for its own sake, than either the toughness of its operatives or the substance of its programs. He can, like those whose legacy he invokes, be "a nifty man with a crowd" (to quote one of his 1972 advance men who isn't backing him this year). He exudes vitality and enthusiasm in public, almost a sense of gaiety as his party discovered in August of 1972 when he joked about being the sixth or seventh choice to be McGovern's running mate.

Shriver's beautifully cut and expensive suits, his youthful appearance in his 60th year, his social poise, add up to a definite plus. Politicians appreciate class at the top of the ticket. But that doesn't make them sign up with a guy who beneath a classy exterior lacks political savvy, as often seems the case with Shriver. An Ohio comparison makes the point. Late in 1959, Kennedy's managers were all over Gov. Mike DiSalle, who not only had a soft spot in his heart for Adlai Stevenson but planned to head a favorite-son delegation. They leaned hard, threatened to go into Ohio's primary with their own slate and take the Catholic ethnics, who made up the bulk of the Democratic vote in those days, away from him. DiSalle collapsed under the pressure and agreed to head a Kennedy delegation, the first big breakthrough for Kennedy in a major industrial state.

In 1972 the McGovern camp was having its problems with Frank King, then head of the Ohio AFL-CIO and a pretty alienated guy after Miami Beach. To make points, they arranged for a public tete-a-tete with Shriver when he was campaigning in Cleveland. King and a couple of aides were to come to the hotel coffee shop, order dessert and coffee. Shriver would be notified and he'd join them, in full view of the press. It's the kind of thing that does wonders for the ego of a politician, and nursing those egos is important if you

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want to be Vice President (or President). King and his aides arrived. They dawdled over their dessert, licked their plates several times as the minutes passed: You can linger over coffee and dessert just so long. Meanwhile, upstairs in his hotel room, Shriver was jumping in and out of the shower, ignoring the pleas from aides on bended knees that he keep his date with King. Finally Shriver went down, arriving in the lobby just in time to say "hi" as King and his men left.

This side of Shriver's personality, mentioned by almost everyone who's worked with him, is best described as "personal anarchy." He shares the tendency with his wife, Eunice Kennedy Shriver. During the 1972 campaign, one night Shriver was scheduled to wind up at a black tie dinner. His schedulers arranged for him to change clothes at a private home en route to the dinner party; however when Shriver was informed of the arrangements as they headed for the private home, he came unglued and demanded that the entire motorcade be rerouted to take him to a hotel so he could check into a room and take his fourth or fifth shower of the day.

The national scene hasn't seen a candidate like that since 1960 when Henry Cabot Lodge, as Nixon's running mate, drove GOP politicians up the wall with his leisurely campaign pace. His thing wasn't showers, it was a nap every afternoon. Nor would he take it on the plane or in the back seat of a car. Lodge insisted on going to his hotel and doing it in a real bed.

One must remember that Shriver, like Lodge, is to the manor born, not the grandson of an Irish pol who schemed and clawed his way to the top of Boston's political jungle of the turn of the century. Shriver's German Catholic ancestors came to Carroll County, Maryland around 1700. They farmed their land, played their role in building a new nation and eventually expanded their activities into what Shriver likes to call "the first agri-business." By the time Sarge arrived, the family's position and affluence were secure. The Shrivers had become part of Baltimore society.

Shriver brings this background into politics along with what he, himself, calls an "extravagant" admiration for his brother-in-law, the late President Kennedy. To Shriver, it translates into good causes. He was *the* natural for the Peace Corps in the early '60s when the country was awakening from the somnambulism of the '50s. The Peace Corps filled a psychic need. Thousands of restless young people were anxious to mix youthful adventure with a chance to help in underdeveloped countries. Shriver had just the flair to give it credibility. He threw himself into the effort, earning high marks everywhere. He excels as an ambassador of goodwill, in no small part because he has an enduring faith in causes. He worked the corridors of "the Hill" seeking and getting support, used his connections in the worlds of business, finance and politics. The results? That's a topic for another story. The important thing, as far as Shriver's image was concerned, is that the volunteers were sent thousands of miles away, out of mind and sight. The costs weren't terribly high and no one seemed to ask, then, if it was having an impact. Let's just assume the Peace Corps people made a difference.

He faced a different set of circumstances when President Johnson summoned him to the White House and asked him to head up his War on Poverty. This war was to be fought at home, under the very noses of carping critics. Like Shriver, LBJ liked motion for its own sake, loved statistics that proved great things were happening. LBJ wanted a crash program. Shriver is a man who, to quote an admirer who helped set up the rural end of VISTA, "can take an idea and run with it." He plunged in. Once again, he surrounded himself with bright, young, ambitious men who saw a couple years on the front lines of this war as a passport to better things. This time, criticism grew with the program.

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There were solid but flawed achievements. Serious questions were raised about a lot of the programs, especially the per person cost of such programs as Job Corps.

It left some lasting programs in its wake, among them Headstart. But OEO's finest contribution was that it encouraged oppressed groups to get into the habit of making their own political decisions. One can trace the awakened spirit on Indian reservations, long under the heel of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), to the OEO. It also gave capable young blacks in the South their first decent salary and some managerial experience.

Shriver, as the man in charge, deserves credit for his firm stand in two areas. In the case of the Peace Corps, he insisted the volunteers steer clear of the internal politics of the host country. At OEO he flatly refused to turn the agency into a patronage operation, on some occasions incurring the wrath of entire congressional delegations. One man he stood up to was Texas' John Connally, who wanted to take over local Community Action Program (CAP) boards.

The years at Peace Corps and OEO left Shriver with a real appreciation for the untapped talents and capacities of the people of this country. He'd like to decentralize government, tap these resources and, as President, turn his attention to the international scene. His view of the much-maligned federal bureaucracy parallels his faith in the individual capacity of Americans. There's nothing "inherently immoral" about working for government, Shriver says, and he thinks it would be "helpful to have leadership in government respecting the people who work for it."

Commingling with Shriver's sense of the individual's capacity is a curious insensitivity to basic attitudes of people of a lower social station. Consider a speech he made in Worcester, Massachusetts. At a meeting sponsored by the Small Business Service Bureau, an organization of some 15,000 small businesses in New England. (To be eligible an owner must have no more than five employees.) Shriver, calling upon the legacy of his in-laws once again, glibly told them how his experience running the Merchandise Mart for his late father-in-law gave him an understanding of their problems. A lot of heads shook in disbelief.

Glaring as a faux pas like that may have been, it doesn't compare with the outright rudeness he sometimes displays, such as the time in the 1972 campaign when he loitered in his swimming pool at Timberlawn while a plane full of press and staffers waited for him at the airport. He complained he was told the plane was to leave at five pm not three pm, and wouldn't budge until then. Or the time in Paris when he kept a French official waiting for an hour while he finished a tennis game.

Shriver launched his campaign by compiling a long and impressive list of "sparklies" in the worlds of entertainment, education, law, politics and high society for his campaign committee. That is what he understands best of New Frontier politics. His next move was to lean on the scattered remnants of the Kennedy tribe to raise the $5000 in each of 20 states that he needed to qualify for federal matching funds, this year's criterion of the serious candidate. That also worked. Shriver's committee list was impressive for one thing in particular: it was heavily sprinkled with leaders from the black, Chicano and Indian communities, all groups conspiciously missing from most other campaigns. Aaron Henry of Mississippi gave a plausible explanation. In his state, he explained, about 50 percent of the county chairman in the "liberal" (and recognized) wing of the party came out of various OEO programs. Now they're saying "thank you."

To run his campaign, Shriver picked Dick Murphy, a 47-year-old veteran of the last seven campaigns who, until Shriver tapped him, had always worked in the shadow of brighter lights such as Larry O'Brien. Murphy is personable but untested. He has a difficult job. Under the new campaign law money is a problem it never had been for the Kennedys, it looks as though Shriver won't have enough cash this time to finance the kind of campaign he must mount in the early primaries to capitalize on his major asset—name identification with the Catholic ethnic vote in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Shriver has made a stab or two at that vote. At a candidate forum in Manchester, New Hampshire, he breathlessly announced he'd just returned from Moscow where he won permission from the Soviets to have another priest serve the foreign community. On the one issue that causes deep religious division—abortion—Shriver takes the "liberal" line. He's personally opposed to abortion but doesn't feel he can impose his moral standards on the rest of the community and won't support a constitutional amendment to overthrow the Supreme Court decision. This hasn't deterred some well-known right-to-life leaders from coming to his support. Nor does it deter his wife from making public statements against liberalized rules on abortion. Shriver himself is irked that it keeps coming up. He insists the Mecklenberg letter wasn't an appeal to right-to-lifers and points out that Jack Vaughan, his successor at the Peace Corps and head of Planned Parenthood, is on his campaign committee.

Abortion is just one of the issues that may trip him up. Unlike his famous in-laws Shriver isn't tough-minded in dealing with tough questions. He frames the kind of short specific answers needed to answer them but lacks the mental discipline to resist attempts by the press to get him to talk on. Sometimes he doesn't even need to be prodded, such as at the Democratic Conference in Baltimore when he gave a succinct, acceptable answer on the abortion question and then, rambled on for five or 10 minutes. In the course of this verbal stroll, he worried aloud about the rate of "recidivism," called abortion a "temporary solution," and then topped it all by saying it's "nothing but a quick

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fix."

Generally speaking Shriver's position on issues is unexceptional. He would agree the endless debates between candidates haven't uncovered major areas of disagreement—except possibly in style.

Shriver shouldn't be written off as a joke despite the rash of jokes told about him. The early polls show his name identification giving him a distinct advantage, such as in Wisconsin where the highly-respected *Milwaukee Journal* poll put him in the lead—27 percent to 24 percent for George Wallace, with the rest of the field trailing. Shriver plans to go into the New Hampshire and Massachusetts primaries where French- and Irish-Americans will cast the bulk of the vote. In New Hampshire, the Ford-Reagan contest may overshadow the battle among a half dozen or more Democrats, making it even more difficult for one of the Democrats to separate himself from the pack. How many of the factory workers, numbed by the constant procession of candidates will find any point of identification with any of these Democratic candidates? Clear-cut issues don't divide them. They all have nice personalities. Two things can make the difference—name identification and organization. Shriver isn't apt to be well organized, given his money problems and the fact most of the political heavies in those states are signing up with other candidates. But his warm public personality, his causes, may shine through. That's what he's counting on as, for the first time in his life, he picks his way through the strange and complex world of presidential politics, a little unsure of what's happening in his own campaign.

Paul R. Wieck

The Perils of Polling

by Ken Bode

Had a presidential election been held between November 24 and December 1, 1975 and had Hubert Humphrey been the Democratic nominee, the senator would have beaten Gerald Ford (or Ronald Reagan) by a mile. So said a national public opinion poll taken by Louis Harris. However if Americans had chosen their next President a few days later (in the period between Dec. 5-8), they would have picked Ford or Reagan over Humphrey, resoundingly. So said George Gallup's poll.

Had so much changed in four days? The controversy over the discrepant results published by the country's two most famous pollsters illustrates both the difficulties of public opinion polling in election years and the pitfalls of interpreting poll results, particularly so long before the conventions. Reputable pollsters always urge caution in interpreting their results. Polls, they say, are nothing more than snapshots of some segment of the public mood, valid only at the moment they are taken. Some also caution that polls taken during pre-election periods may find voter opinion in a state of flux, and that opinions about candidates may be less stable than attitudes toward gun control, desegregation or the right to strike. Nevertheless the major polling organizations have established their reputations largely by forecasting accurately the outcomes of presidential elections. Between them, Gallup and Harris take more than 30 national polls every year, but their final general election forecast every two years is the only poll for which there are statistics available with which to measure their accuracy. As a result the pollsters invest a great deal in maintaining those reputations. This year, for example, the Harris organization will do a national poll every 10 days beginning in September, then over the final pre-election weekend in November, four polls in as many days. Their results will be averaged for the final prediction. Gallup has come within 1.5 percentage points of forecasting national election results since 1952, and Harris has done about as well since 1964, a fact that is repeatedly called to the attention of newspaper readers. Their success contributes to the confidence many of us have in *all* poll results and to the press attention polls get.

Ever since the science—or craft—of polling became popular in the 1930s and '40s, an inspired debate has gone on about whether polls merely measure public opinion, or whether they influence opinion as well. Pollsters deny the existence of a "bandwagon" effect, and indeed there is no evidence that the publication of one poll actually causes a shifting of opinion in the next.

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However, polls have their effects:

First, candidates who constantly rank low in the polls often have difficulty raising money. For example, after the 1968 Chicago convention, the Democrats' battle-scarred nominee Hubert Humphrey was lagging 16 points behind Richard Nixon. Humphrey strategists spent the weeks normally devoted to intensive fundraising and organizing in merely attempting to erase the image he had as a sure loser. Four years later George McGovern was able to overcome meager poll ratings by drawing money and organization from well-established antiwar groups. That his performance was an exception to a standing rule is evidenced by the penurious state of this year's Democratic long shots.

Campaigns react to polls in other important ways. In mid-December, the Gallup organization reported that former California Gov. Ronald Reagan had overtaken President Ford, both among the GOP rank and file and among independent voters. The effect on the Ford campaign organization was instantaneous. Gallup's figures arrived during a gathering of the Southern Republican Conference in Houston, where the resultant mood of Ford's supporters was described as ranging from quiet desperation to near panic. In response Howard Callaway, the President's campaign chairman, scrapped the Republican 11th commandment—Thou shalt not speak ill of any other Republican—in a flailing attack on Reagan that by all accounts lost his candidate more ground among GOP leaders than it gained. The Ford organization was stunned badly by the two polls and came into the new year like a boxer still trying to shake off the effects of a bad round.

The results of presidential primaries and caucuses measure partly how well a candidate did relative to the other candidates, but also how well he did relative to expectations shaped in part by polls. (James Perry, a correspondent for *The National Observer*, recalling 1972, said, "We read Dr. Gallup's famous poll and wrote off George McGovern.") In New Hampshire that year Edmund Muskie won the primary with 46 percent of the vote, but he fell short of the 58 percent that an early *Boston Globe* poll said he *ought* to get, and even the 50 percent that the press corps decided he *had* to get. Thus the news and subsequent analysis from New Hampshire was all about how poorly Muskie had done.

This year's polls have already had an unusually strong impact on the presidential contests in both parties, and we are barely at the starting gate. On the Democratic side, with Sen. Edward Kennedy not included, the major polls show Hubert Humphrey to be the strongest candidate. This fact, combined with the belief that the party would never nominate George Wallace (who places second) and the failure of the lesser-known contenders to move up in the polls has created a boomlet for Humphrey in the press and inside the party. Some columnists have all but awarded him the 1976 nomination.

Why Humphrey? "At this time, the polls are basically reflecting name identification," says Michael Barone, vice president of Hart Research Corporation. That, in turn, is why Gallup and Harris continue to publish Ford and Reagan match-ups with the non-candidate Humphrey. "It's the only way to get an accurate assessment of Ford's strength," says Lou Harris. "Humphrey gives you a hypothetical potential of what a Democrat might do against Ford." Harris notes that his interviewers ask about the longer shots—Morris Udall, Birch Bayh, Fred Harris and the like—but until a candidate crosses a threshold where about 70 percent of the electorate knows who he is, they do not publish the results of the match-ups. "It would be misleading information," he adds.

On the Republican side, the opinion polls have had even greater impact. They have all but destroyed for this year the proposition that an incumbent President could not be denied renomination by his own party. In Ford's case, of course, the assumption was more tenuous than usual, because he is an appointed President. Nevertheless Ford's tumble in the polls has virtually installed Ronald Reagan as the GOP front-runner. *Washington Post* columnist George Will suggested that the significance of Ford's decline "may be that, suddenly, Reagan has no formidable opposition." Others have resurrected an earlier notion that Ford may withdraw and not seek a full term of his own, (thus forcing the President to begin denying this again). Some pundits come close to treating Ford as a lame duck, already repudiated by his party.

Ford's difficulties were not all caused by the polls, but there is little doubt they were seriously aggravated by the Gallup and Harris findings.

In its recent poll Harris gave Humphrey 52 percent of the vote to Ford's 41 percent; Humphrey 50 percent, Reagan 43. The Gallup results: Humphrey 39 percent, Ford 51; Humphrey 42 percent, Reagan 50. We have no objective means to test which, if either, poll was accurate. Both pollsters have been pressed to explain the disparate findings and each has stressed the different time periods in which the two polls were taken. Harris interviewers were in the field just before President Ford's China trip, Gallup's just after. They suggest that Gallup's higher rating for Ford may have been produced by what the public saw and heard beamed from Peking.

Others, including some professional pollsters, tend to regard the timing explanation as unsatisfactory. "The China trip was by all accounts a nothing," says competing pollster Burns Roper of Roper and Associates. "Besides, it fails to account for the disparities between the two polls in Reagan's ratings. *He* didn't go to China."

Though both Gallup and Harris have expressed confidence in their procedures, some have suggested possible sampling problems. "Every time you draw a

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sample you have a 95 percent chance that it accurately represents the total population and a five percent chance that it does not," says one pollster. "This may have been a case where one poll fell into that five percent range." Another proposes that this may have been the odd situation in which both polls were operating at the maximum margin of error in opposite directions, Gallup's four percentage point error (if that's what it was) skewed in the direction of the GOP and Harris' tipped in the Democratic direction. Probability theory, on which all public opinion research relies, makes both explanations possible.

One Gallup report shows Ford against Reagan with only GOP voters. Here conclusions are based on only a segment of a national sample (Republicans), and the normal three to four percent margin of error is increased to eight percent. It can go in either direction. Thus while Gallup's findings had Reagan leading Ford 40 percent to 32 percent among Republicans, the two candidates may have actually been dead even or Reagan much further ahead. Gallup's conclusions are based on interviews with only 352 GOP respondents. Several respected pollsters I've interviewed in the past two weeks say flatly that the number of Republicans in Gallup's sample was too small and the error margin too great to justify the conclusions being drawn.

When Gallup's findings were released, *The New York Times* called them "a major political event." Thus whether polls create a bandwagon effect with the public really begs the question. The current Ford and Humphrey situations demonstrate conclusively enough that polls have an important impact on politics. Moreover that impact is greater in the primary period before the nominating conventions when the major parties are winnowing the field from 10 or 12 candidates to two, than it is in the post-convention, general election period.

Polls do shape expectations; at the start of the race, they more or less determine each candidate's position on the track. Also anticipated outcomes play a large role in a multi-candidate nominating contest. Facing a choice among half a dozen or more active competitors, a voter is more likely to back his second or third choice for "who can win" than his first choice who has "no chance" of winning. And where, in January and February, do Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary voters get the information that one candidate can't win but another might? From polls, of course.

Nor does it matter much how limited or flawed a poll might be. If it exists, it is newsworthy, and often becomes front page material. In late October the Iowa Democratic party held its annual Jefferson-Jackson dinner in Des Moines. Several of the Democratic presidential hopefuls were on hand for the event, along with a large contingent of the national press corps. Local newspaper reporters passed out "straw poll" ballots to those who attended, about a quarter of whom filled them out. The results of that enterprise have installed Jimmy Carter as the "frontrunner" in Iowa. Journalistic accounts of the poll ran in papers coast to coast; the page-one *New York Times* story was headlined, "Carter Seems to Hold Big Lead as Iowa Caucuses Approach." Nationally known reporters, who should know better, depicted the straw poll as "representing a cross-section of party activists from all parts of the state." Carter's lead—he got 23 percent, ahead of Humphrey who came in second with 12 percent—was called "surprising, but solid." In fact the dinner was a $36 a plate affair, and those who bought tickets could hardly be called representative of the party at large.

A week later, the Iowa Poll, a respected statewide survey sponsored since 1943 by the *Des Moines Register and Tribune*, published the results of a poll it took of Democratic voters. It showed Edward Kennedy leading with 34 percent. Humphrey and "Don't Know" tied for second with 13 percent, and 13 candidates under 10 percent. Carter, along with Lloyd Bentsen, Julian Bond, Frank Church, Fred Harris, Terry Sanford and Morris Udall, got 1 percent each. Jimmy Carter may indeed be the frontrunner in Iowa today, and if he is it may have something to do with the publicity generated by the Jefferson-Jackson dinner poll.

It is in the period when they have the greatest potential impact that polls should be regarded with the most skepticism. For several reasons it is notoriously more difficult to poll in primaries than in general elections. Since in a Republican primary voters are all

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Republicans and so are the candidates, there is, as Bud Lewis, the head of NBC's elections unit puts it, no "partisan rudder." Voters' decisions tend to be based on transient factors such as name identification and a candidate's personality.

Because they use national samples, the polls that Gallup and Harris run do not pick up changes in state electorates where candidates are campaigning intensively for primaries. How little or well a candidate is known obviously affects his standing in the polls, and greatly so. In the upcoming weeks, for example, Democratic hopefuls Bayh, Carter, Harris, Shriver and Udall will each spend five to 10 days in Iowa preparing for the January caucuses. Some will supplement their personal appearances with television, radio and direct mail. Then, when the primaries begin, they will expend similar efforts in a concentrated fashion in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Wisconsin. Even the longest shots will be pretty well known in states that choose their delegates early, but, as George McGovern proved in 1972, they may still not move a notch in the national polls.

A second problem with polls in the primary period is that voter turnout is much lower and it is more difficult for pollsters to estimate who will and who will not vote. "Screening" for actual voters is an important ingredient in accurate polling. For general elections, where normal turnout is around 60 percent, the Harris organization has a four question voter screen to eliminate ineligibles and likely non-voters from their sample. In the primary period, it is far more difficult to locate that portion of each party's voters—ranging widely from about 10-to-60 percent—who will be at the polls. Also it is very expensive to try; interviewers may have to contact two or three times as many people to get an accurate sampling of likely voters, and most pollsters do not feel the expense is justified.

Finally polling in the presidential primary period has problems common to no other form of polling. In the next few weeks, there will not be just one election, but many—seven primaries in the six weeks—between February 24 and April 6. The decision-making process will be going on in state electorates at different speeds, and the vast media coverage of the results of one primary after another will accelerate opinion movement even more. "Polls get out of date pretty quickly," says Pat Caddell, who polled for George McGovern in 1972 and now heads Cambridge Survey Research, adding, "National polls in this period are pretty useless."

Illustrative of the kind of opinion swings that can occur even for a public figure whose image is presumably pretty well established, is the 15 point drop in President Ford's popularity between October and December. Indicative of the kinds of things that primary voters respond to and the speed with which they respond was the drop-off suffered by then New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller in his 1964 California primary contest against Barry Goldwater. On the Friday before voting, Rockefeller led Goldwater 49-to-40 percent, with the balance undecided. The next day, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Jr. was born, drawing attention to the governor's recent divorce and remarriage which many older, more conservative and female voters strongly disapproved. The day after the baby's birth, the polls showed Goldwater 40, Rockefeller 42 percent with 18 percent undecided, and by election day Rockefeller's lead had totally evaporated. He lost 52-to-48 percent.

In the next several months, Gallup and Harris and other major pollsters will be active, the television networks will question voters outside polling places to find out what they did inside, a dozen or more newspapers will commission statewide polls in primary states, roving bands of reporters will interview citizens in carefully selected precincts of bellwether communities, and a few presidential candidates may even selectively leak some figures from their latest private campaign polls. Nearly all the data will find their way into print, and none of the sources will be eager to underestimate the importance of their findings.

Then it is up to the public to figure out how to distinguish responsible opinion samplings taken at great care and cost from those where an axe is being ground, or those where Rowland Evans and Robert Novak go knocking on a few doors in Jacksonville, Florida or Marengo, Illinois. (Of the latter enterprise, Albert Cantril, the newly elected president of the National Council of Public Polls [NCPP] comments: "Their samples can't possibly support their sweeping conclusions, and the fact that they use questionnaires prepared for them by established pollsters doesn't give them any better basis for inference. It is just misleading.")

Those who read and follow poll results will have to figure out how to do so critically, remembering not to accord any polls in the primary period the same credence they do the national samples that appear the Monday morning before a general election. Between now and the national nominating conventions, the one thing to remember is that next week's poll results may contradict the ones you read today.

George Gallup is fond of quoting Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes. "While the individual man is an insoluble puzzle," said Doyle, "in the aggregate he becomes a mathematical certainty. You can never foretell what any one man will do, but you can say with precision what an average number will be up to." As a guideline for the skeptical poll watcher, Doyle's rule might be paraphrased as follows: "Between now and July, it will be pretty damn hard to find out what any average number of Republicans and Democrats will be up to, no one will consistently do it very well, and you ought to cast a cold eye on anybody who claims he can."

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The Great Foreign Policy Debate We Ought to Be Having

by Richard J. Barnet

Six months after the worst defeat in American history the great debate on what went wrong in Indochina has yet to happen. Like the "bloodbath" in Vietnam, the "orgy of recrimination" in America has turned out to be official hyperbole. Instead of the "wave of McCarthyism" so widely predicted by administration officials, there is a bipartisan silence. Vietnam is "behind us," President Ford proclaims, and no one wants to look back.

In most countries a 20-year war costing over $150 billion, 55,000 battlefield deaths, and lasting damage to the economy would not be written off so easily. Ordinarily generals who lose battles are dismissed. In parliamentary democracies governments that lose wars expect to fall. In the US the architects of the final disaster are still in power. Far from reexamining the world view that led a generation of American leaders, and the rest of us with them, into the famous quagmire, they have rededicated themselves—and us—to that same world view. There is an eerie quality of *déjà vu* to the major post-Vietnam national security initiatives. Mayaguez (echoes of the Gulf of Tonkin); nuclear threats in Korea (shades of Gen. MacArthur); a proposed military spending program that locks the country into five years of escalating budgets (a replay of the Kennedy buildup of the early 1960s); renewed threats of military intervention in the Persian Gulf (memories of the Dominican Republic and Vietnam).

The official lesson of Vietnam, it seems, is that America's global defense perimeter must be redrawn, alliances cemented and the threat of American military power, including nuclear weapons, made more credible. The foreign policy debate, to the extent there is one at all, is about where to draw the new defense line and what weapons to use? Should Turkey keep its honorary membership in the free world? How much pressure should be put on Portugal? How fast should the US stand in Korea? But there is no challenge to either the vision of American or the vision of international politics that inspired five American Presidents to risk and lose in Indochina.

The discussion on foreign policy is taking place within narrow limits because the participants on all sides basically accept the same world view. There is a tacit agreement as to the goals America should be pursuing in international politics, shared assumptions about what is happening in the world, and a common faith about what American power can do.

Basically the discussion of current American foreign policy since the debate in Indochina accepts uncritically the cold war model of reality. America's goal remains as President Johnson stated it: "We are the number one nation and we are going to stay the number one nation." Despite détente, the central threat to the peace is still the Soviet Union. Soviet power must be contained by maintaining superior nuclear forces and projecting conventional military might through alliances, military aid arrangements and foreign bases. The world must be made as safe as possible for American economic growth by discouraging or aborting anti-capitalist revolutions wherever possible. American economic power must be employed to counter efforts of the nonindustrialized countries to alter the present international economic system.

The most fundamental assumptions of American foreign policy are beyond debate within government because the bureaucracies charged with making policy depend upon them for their survival. It is not for the air force to question whether "national security" requires keeping the foreign bases acquired in the 1950s or for the CIA to question whether American interests must be served by clandestine or paramilitary operations in the Third World. Bureaucracies keep doing what they do. To overcome bureaucratic inertia requires deliberate choices to move in a different direction and political support for alternative policies.

But politicians do not like to question the basic assumptions of foreign policy either. Indeed the last time the United States had a "great debate" on fundamental issues of foreign policy was the eve of World War II when the country was divided on what to do about Hitler. Henry Wallace and Robert Taft, each in his own way, tried to start a debate about America's role in shaping the postwar world, but the Truman administration and the "internationalist wing" of the Republican party fashioned a bipartisan consensus on foreign policy that held firm until the final years of the Vietnam war. Even the celebrated Great Debate of 1951 over the right of the President to station divisions in Europe in peacetime was more a debate about the limits of presidential power and the choice of military strategy (*Fortress America* v. *Forward Strategy*) than a debate about goals and purposes.

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In the years of the bipartisan consensus political leaders have avoided clear-cut debate on the most fundamental issues, preferring instead to use foreign policy as political mood music: posturing about "rolling back" Soviet power from Eastern Europe (1952); a fictitious "missile gap" (1960); Nixon's "secret plan" (1968).

The one thing on which the "best and the brightest" and their critics agree is that the disaster in Indochina was a consequence of miscalculation. The strength of the revolutionary forces in Vietnam was underestimated, the passivity of the American people was overestimated (Dean Rusk calls it a lack of patience), and the serious political and economic implications of fighting a protracted colonial war were virtually ignored. At crucial moments Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger lost touch with reality because they did not understand what was happening either in Vietnam or in the United States.

The best hope of restoring a sense of reality to foreign policy is to challenge and test official wisdom through democratic debate. In *Democracy in America* Tocqueville pinpointed the difficulties. Since the public does not like secrecy and quickly loses patience, he said, democracies are "decidedly inferior to other governments" in the conduct of their foreign relations. What he meant was that it is harder for a nation in which policy is debated to act decisively and consistently. More recently Dean Acheson lamented "the limitation imposed by democratic political practices," which makes it difficult to "conduct our foreign affairs in the national interest." Debate is supposed to embarrass the executive and hamper his style. The argument for "stopping politics at the water's edge" is that dissension exposes weakness to potential enemies. Others argue that since ordinary citizens cannot understand the subtleties of foreign policy, debate leads to jingoism. This notion flatly contradicts democratic theory, which holds that the testing of ideas in the political marketplace is the best way to avoid the catastrophic errors caused by the distorted vision of isolated leaders.

There is an obvious difficulty in carrying on a serious debate on foreign policy; the issues are complex, remote and emotionally charged. But it is doubtful that national security issues are inherently more complex than most domestic problems of advanced industrial societies. Foreign policy issues are, nevertheless, remote from most people's immediate concern. To get public attention when it is needed—it is usually not desired—statesmen resort to oversell and scare tactics, making points, in Dean Acheson's words, "clearer than truth."

Over the last generation code words have been developed that are designed to elicit an almost automatic approval of what the President wishes to do—"commitment," "credibility," "isolationist," "responsibility," and of course "national security" itself. As a first step to a more serious debate on foreign policy we should examine the extent to which we are trapped by the peculiar language George Orwell predicted would dominate 20th-century politics. A moratorium should be declared on meaningless terms like "commitment" and "credibility" and especially the incantation "national security." They could be treated as expletives and deleted from political discourse.

Commitment is a good example. What exactly did the government commit to whom? How was the commitment made? For what reason and for how long? So is "creditibility." Who should believe what about the United States, and why? Had we gotten behind the abstractions that became war cries to debate who Thieu was, who supported him, what his commitment was to his country and who the Communists were and what their commitments were, we might never have deceived ourselves into thinking that we could win the war—or should. At least the American people would have had a better idea of the price involved.

The use of historical and psychological analogies also inhibits rational debate on foreign policy. How many of the decisions that locked the US in Vietnam were made in the shadow of Munich? It is unlikely that better decisions will be made by invoking the spectre of Vietnam. The problems of one generation cannot be solved by replaying the history of another. Nor is much clarity gained by talking about nations as if they were human beings—whether pitiful helpless giants or candidates for a nervous breakdown. Metaphors from the physical world such as "power vacuum" are also deceptive. The word forecloses the whole question of imperialism by assuming a law of nature that small, weak countries must inevitably be dominated by one super power or another.

However to restore a sense of realism to the discussion of American foreign policy requires more than a reform of language. It requires examination of major national goals and evaluation of how well we have been doing in reaching them. In the nuclear age the first goal of a foreign policy is protection from nuclear attack. Since there is no defense, as Presidents and Secretaries of Defense have repeatedly told us, survival of the United States depends upon our not being involved in a nuclear war. (I am assuming that even if an American Adam and Eve were to rise from the radioactive rubble to repopulate the earth, as Sen. Richard Russell prayed at the height of the Vietnam war, that would not be viewed as a wholly satisfactory outcome by a majority of Americans.)

After spending tens of billions on nuclear weapons since 1945 the US is of course much more vulnerable than it was then. The Soviet Union is now a formidable nuclear power, and nuclear proliferation has proceeded inexorably. The latter development means that nuclear weapons are not only in many new hands but in many new disputes. Some of these, such as the Israeli-Arab and India-Pakistan conflicts involve such deep feelings

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of desperation as to tempt the use of suicidal weapons. As the new commandment of the marine corps, Gen. Louis Wilson, recently remarked, it is doubtful that a general nuclear war can be averted once a tactical nuclear weapon is used on a battlefield. Thus, despite the minor arms control arrangements associated with détente, the dangers of nuclear war appear to be growing.

The United States is embarking on a massive weapons building program and has reasserted the right to use nuclear weapons first, even against non-nuclear powers. The issue is whether, given the present world environment, these policies will make the planet more dangerous or less dangerous for everybody, including the United States. We need a serious public debate on an alternative national security strategy based on de-legitimizing nuclear weapons: renunciation of first use; major diplomatic initiative for substantial cutbacks by the US and the USSR in nuclear weapons; a strong campaign to limit proliferation. At the very least the clichés of the arms race, such as "bargaining chips" (amassing new weapons for the purpose of persuading adversaries to get rid of theirs) ought to be subjected to critical debate. After a 30-year arms race, we have some experience of how nations behave in deadly competition, and the experience does not support the theory under which the US nuclear buildup is being planned. Yet, despite the grim prognosis for "stabilizing" (another favorite expletive) the arms race and avoiding nuclear war, there is no national debate that takes account of this experience.

The second most important goal of American foreign policy has been the containment of communism. But this goal has become confused over the years. The issues were clearer in the 1950s when the United States had the power to isolate the USSR and China, keep the left from taking power or sharing power in West Europe, and to destroy pro-Communist movements in the Third World. Indeed, until recently, US policy was designed to encourage a "mellowing" of the Soviet system. But the comfortable consistency of militant anti-communism is gone. The Communists in the Kremlin have become friends of the President (Brezhnev was one of Nixon's most loyal backers) and business associates of the Chase Manhattan Bank; the Communists in Chile and many other places are still targets of CIA operations.

The fundamental purpose behind the anti-Communist policy was to contain the expansion of Soviet power. That purpose has failed not because of Soviet strength but because of America's growing weakness. It is not Soviet gains but American losses that have produced a shift in the balance of power. The United States has been forced to agree to the division of Germany and to Soviet control over Eastern Europe. (There is no other meaning to the Helsinki Conference.) The left is struggling to keep power in Portugal, is gaining strength in France and Italy, and will probably play an important role in Spain. In the United Nations it is the United States, not the Soviet Union, that is becoming increasingly isolated from the majority of the members. After 30 years of the cold war the Soviet Union is stronger militarily and more active diplomatically on a world scale than ever. Although Stalin's massacres are over, the Soviet system remains essentially unchanged. (Indeed the cold war has probably produced more negative changes in American society than positive changes in Soviet society.)

During the cold war the national security bureaucracy became so fascinated with the confrontation that it forgot what it was about. To regain some clarity and sense of realism in our foreign policy, Americans need to debate the premises of anti-communism, which means, as we have seen, quite different things to different people. The basic reason for containing the Soviet Union, George Kennan argued in his famous February 1946 cable was that the men in the Kremlin believed that their own security demanded that "our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken." In short, at the most fundamental level, the cold war was fought in the name of preserving American society.

The principle issue for debate is whether strategies chosen for preserving American society have, rather, undermined it. Having analyzed the threat of communism as a military threat and invested about $1.6 trillion to counter it, the United States has systematically starved its own civil society. The fiscal crisis of the cities and the appalling physical decay in every metropolitan center are the products of a generation of neglect. There is an urgent need to debate whether the failure to reinvest adequately in American society and in the American industrial base has not weakened the foundations of American power, whether the health of the American economy has not indeed been sacrificed to "national security." To what extend are unemployment and inflation attributable to the mismanagement of our economy through distorted investment priorities? This is not a new debate. The fiscal conservatives in the Eisenhower era, like Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey, thought the Soviet strategy was to force America to spend itself into bankruptcy. With the advent of the rhetoric of omnipotence—"we shall bear any burden, pay any price"—such notions were dismissed as troglodyte. The debate should be resumed about the real meaning of "national security." Can this society be secure if it does not assure the opportunity for decent work, decent health care, decent housing and a decent diet for its citizens? Can it do this if it continues to define "national security" in primarily military terms?

When the cold war began a few voices warned of the dangers of the "garrison state," that we might lose our freedom through our efforts to defend it. Watergate

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dramatized the vulnerability of our system of civil liberties and the ease with which executive tyranny can be established in the name of "national security." The attempted Nixon coup—the systematic campaign to take control of the machinery of government to harass and destroy political enemies—was narrowly averted but it illustrated how far our constitutional system had been eroded by secrecy, emergency powers, lying in the national interest, and other familiar byproducts of protracted war. The second unique source of strength, besides the extraordinary American economy is a system of constitutional liberty that has been admired around the world. It is surprising that the issues concerning the protection of those liberties are not integrally related to the debate on foreign policy. Certain kinds of foreign policies require more secrecy and more deception than others. The issues ought to be put in such a way that the American people could vote on the extent to which they are willing to sacrifice freedom for "national security." The issue is not whether the Russians might like to see our society disrupted, our traditional way of life destroyed and the international authority of our state broken, to quote Kennan again—that can be taken for granted—but whether this is more likely to come about through Soviet calculations or American miscalculations.

Much of our official anti-communism has not involved the Soviet Union directly. Well over half of the military budget is for what used to be called conventional forces (ships, planes, tanks and ground combat units) and these, along with the CIA covert action operations, have been used to bring about or prevent internal political changes in other countries, mostly in Asia, Africa and Latin America. A partial list of countries in which a US military intervention or a US-backed coup has been attempted since the end of World War II includes the Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Iran, Laos, Lebanon, the Sudan, Syria and Vietnam.

The US has found itself fighting nationalist movements around the world in the name of anti-communism for three basic reasons. (Since we are likely to encounter similar nationalist movements closer to home in the next few years—Panama and Puerto Rico, for example—it is especially urgent to examine them.) We are implementing our global counterrevolutionary policy by maintaining forces not needed for the defense of the US at a cost of about $36 billion a year. What are we buying? Why are we buying it?

The first argument for fighting a nationalist, revolutionary movement led by Communists as in Vietnam, has been containment of Soviet power. From the early days of the cold war to the Johnson administration the official US belief was that insurgent movements were secret weapons of the Kremlin. Mao was Stalin's agent. Ho was a puppet on a long string from Moscow. It was legitimate and necessary to intervene internally in the affairs of other countries to forestall Russian conquest by Trojan Horse. The historical evidence suggests otherwise. Nationalist movements, whether inspired by Marxist-Leninism or not, are fiercely independent. When they succeed they do not automatically increase the power of the Soviet state. (Indeed the relations between the Kremlin and Communist regimes that have come to power independent of the Red Army—China, Albania, Cuba, Vietnam—have often been stormy.) Soviet arms shipments to North Vietnam followed massive US military intervention. It was the US that set the pace of the competitive intervention. So also in Cuba. Both the Cubans and the Vietnamese have made it clear that they would like normal, even friendly relations with the US to lessen their dependence upon the USSR. If the motive behind the counterrevolutionary policy is containment of the Soviet Union, we should consider whether a policy of competitive non-intervention would serve our purposes better. We now know that the more engaged the US has become in aiding governments threatened with insurgency, the more Russia and China have aided the revolutionaries and the more weak independence movements have fallen under their sway.

But there is a second argument for using American power to influence internal political and economic changes in other countries. There is a missionary spirit behind American imperialism. With technical aid and foreign investment we can rescue the poor countries of the Third World from the irrationalities of socialism. We can transplant the American model of development and in the process create a congenial world for the flourishing of the American economy. But there is now abundant evidence that the American model is a failure for most poor countries, that without basic structural reform for the redistribution of wealth a veneer of capitalism in feudal societies perpetuates and exacerbates poverty. True Communist approaches to development have at times been dogmatic, impractical and punitive. But if we take as the criterion of success the welfare of the majority of people—literacy, nutrition, health care, jobs—the Communist revolutions that we oppose—China, Cuba, North Vietnam—seem to do far better than the "Free World" governments we support. There should be a candid discussion about why the United States so often appears to be on "the wrong side" in revolutionary struggles. Indeed why is it in the interest of the United States to be on any side? If we do not have the answers for poor countries, why should we not encourage a variety of experiments? (The Chilean case is instructive. By helping to overthrow the Allende experiment we helped bring into power a government that is not only repressive but incompetent. Because of disastrous economic policies the position of the Chilean middle class for whose benefit the coup was supposedly carried out is much worse than it was under Allende.)

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The third argument behind global anti-communism is the threat of totalitarianism. Communist regimes do not offer freedom of the press or other democratic liberties traditional to the United States. Political repression and executions have taken place under left-oriented nationalist regimes. But the argument that the US is fighting communism in the name of freedom is wearing thin since the level of repression in such leading members of the Free World as Brazil, Iran and Indonesia is high. By ignoring repression in the countries it supports most closely, the United States has undermined whatever moral influence it might have over other countries. It is difficult after welcoming the Salazar dictatorship as an ally for over 20 years to emerge as a convincing defender of Portuguese democracy. The issue of totalitarianism is central. But the debate should focus on the extent to which the US in its present policies, particularly military aid and arms sales, is promoting and legitimizing dictatorship and the extent to which the spread of dictatorship around the world ultimately threatens the survival of democracy in America.

In short we need a debate about how the US should relate to the process of political and economic developments taking place around the world. President Ford and Secretary Kissinger repeatedly warn of a wave of "neo-isolationism" that will engulf Americans and cause them to shirk their "responsibilities." These expletives are the current official favorites. Every imperial power has asserted its responsibilities for other people and has killed a good number of them in the process. "Isolationism" had a real meaning in 1940. It was a convenient label to apply to the significant number of Americans who didn't, for a variety of reasons, want to fight Hitler. It is now used in political discourse like a Pavlovian bell. Everyone wants to fight Hitler. But the contemporary meaning of the word is hopelessly confused. (Adding a "neo" merely makes matters murkier.)

The links of interdependence between the American economy and the world economy are so pervasive that isolationism is not a possibility for the United States. The choice is not whether the United States is to be integrally involved in the international system but the terms of the involvement. This is the crux of the debate we are not having. The self-perpetuating elite that has run our foreign policy for a generation have assume that the United States cannot afford to share its power by accepting limits on its right to make crucial unilateral decisions—whether to use nuclear weapons, whether to invade other countries, whether to change the ground rules of the international monetary system. The strategy has been to perpetuate for as long as possible the preeminent military and economic position the United States enjoyed at the end of World War II. As the ruined economies of West Europe and Japan recovered and the Soviet Union became a formidable military rival, the tactics for achieving continued American preeminence have been modified. The issues concerning the management of the world economy and distribution of resources are crowding out the older issues of the cold war, many of which like Germany, Vietnam and Cuba have more or less been settled. But the resistance to sharing power remains. The hostile reaction of the Ford administration to the efforts of the poor countries to create a more equitable "new international economic order" reflects a deep-seated isolationism. We are in the unenviable position of defending privilege against the majority of people in an increasingly desperate world.

There is nothing exceptional about such a posture. Every great nation tries to hold on to what it has. But empires collapse because they lose touch with their own time and employ self-defeating strategies for maintaining their power. The issue is whether the security of Americans will be better served by trying to perpetuate the era of American hegemony after the conditions for it have passed or by taking the lead in building a more equitable international economic order and a less militarized international political order. Candor, now in vogue as a political virtue, requires a painful assessment of the real conflicts between American comfort and the survival of a majority of mankind.

One of the most deceptive words in the foreign policy lexicon is "we." Discussion of the American national interest assumes that all Americans share the same interests, that what is a good US policy for Anaconda in Chile or for Gulf Oil in Italy is necessarily a good policy for American wage earners and consumers. It has become clearer in recent months that CIA covert operations have to a significant degree been for the direct support of US-based multinational corporations. That is one example—the Soviet wheat deal is another—of a foreign policy initiative from which the benefits flow to a small group of Americans and the costs are borne by a much larger segment of society. It is by no means clear that unemployed workers in Detroit, supermarket shoppers and small businessmen have the same foreign policy interests as the largest banks and corporations. Yet it is the representatives of these institutions who continue to make policy in the name of all Americans. There can be no serious consideration of alternative goals and policies without enlarging the circle of policy makers to include representatives of many domestic interests which are vitally affected by foreign policy decisions but which now have no voice in deciding what "we" do as a nation. Until foreign policy is seen for what it is—a reflection of present domestic policy and a context for evolving domestic policy—discussions will never rise above emotionalism and abstraction. A redefinition of America's role in the world will come, if it does, only as part of a process of redefining American society.

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Thoughts on a Bicentennial City

Boston Desegregation

by Joseph Featherstone

This is the second year and second phase of court-ordered desegregation in Boston. Phase I, in the fall of 1974, touched off demonstrations, boycotts and bloodshed. Cool weather brought a lull to the racial violence that flickered through the streets last summer. With the exception of South Boston High, which remains in turmoil, most of the city's schools are relatively quiet. Attendance figures have climbed steadily. Resistance to busing continues strong in white neighborhoods, particularly the Irish enclaves of Charlestown and South Boston. Groups opposed to busing, such as ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights) have been subdued. Near the high school in Charlestown, mothers have staged marches against busing, prayed and sat in the streets. At night white youths throw rocks and bait the police. This school year, supporters of desegregation, or at least obedience to the law, are better organized in the city. The city's leaders, who have equivocated on busing, now stand foursquare against violence. A desultory mayoral campaign has resulted in the reelection of Mayor Kevin White. The legal technology for enforcing desegregation has expanded into a formidable machine: city, state and metropolitan police, units of the National Guard, federal marshals, the FBI, officials from the Justice Department, have all entered into play at one time or another. A teachers' strike came and went without shattering the tense calm. A relative quiet reigns, but a lot of people are very scared.

Meanwhile Bicentennial visitors arrive in town to see the sights—Bunker Hill memorial is just across the way from Charlestown High—and pay tribute to the 200th anniversary of our republic.

US District Court Judge Arthur Garrity has issued a very complicated desegregation plan. Besides busing, it involves new districts, a large city-wide magnet district with special programs to draw students from the neighborhoods voluntarily, and a complex series of advisory councils to monitor the whole operation. The judge is making an unprecedented effort to link desegregation with improvements in education. It remains to be seen how much he'll accomplish. His notion of pairing schools with businesses and universities still has to be worked out. The distinguished array of institutions of higher education around Boston stays aloof from schools; strangely enough, it is not clear what crack universities can offer the city's schoolchildren. Apart from student assignments, the most visible effect of the judge's planning is the presence in the system's 162 schools of more black and Spanish-speaking teachers. Boston's students are 52 percent white, 36 percent black and 12 percent other minorities, such as Spanish-speaking children and Chinese. Desegregation here, as elsewhere, has sharpened each group's awareness of grievances: Spanish-speaking parents worry that it has thrown bilingual services into confusion, and some Chinese parents conducted a boycott to resist busing.

Judge Garrity has in many respects taken temporary possession of the school system. No one supposes that a federal judge should be doing this, yet the situation is not of his making. It results from the fact that for many years both the school administration and the school committee have deliberately segregated black schoolchildren, maintaining what is in many respects a dual school system. The school administration is a mainly Irish hierarchy that looks back to better days; its inbred loyalties have produced a style of professionalism even more pathological and vacuum-sealed than that of other big city systems. The Boston School Committee, though it often speaks the genuine concerns of its constituents, has been a scandal.

A new school committee has recently been elected. With the election, the committee lost two opponents of desegregation. The voters elected three moderates and one staunch foe of busing. One of the moderates, Kathleen Sullivan, got more votes than any other candidate for any city office, which some take as a mark of the voters' recognition that the old school committee had taken them for a ride.

Whatever the future of the new committee, the present mess is in large part the work of the old. Three of its members profited politically and in more direct ways from the city's prolonged school crisis—one is under indictment for misuse of school funds—and thus had a vested interest in keeping trouble alive. On the eve of the second phase of desegregation, for example, the old committee fired William J. Leary, the capable school superintendent who supervised Phase I. They replaced Leary with Marion J. Fahey, who promptly began appointing as functionaries in the school system figures known as fund raisers for school committeemen. (Local Boston practice is to shake down employees of the school system for political contributions.) As the desegregation crisis came to a head, Fahey busied herself getting rid of the new district

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superintendent of the magnet schools, John Coakley. Coakley's offenses were two: he worked hard and in good faith planning desegregation, and he publicly refused to go along with the custom of donating to the political campaigns of school committee members.

The new school committee may change this sort of thing. And Judge Garrity may have performed a real service in opening up new channels in the city's moribund educational politics. Citizens and parents have started to participate in the newly activated district councils and advisory groups. Whatever happens, it seems likely that the administration and the new school committee are going to get more attention from parents and people active at the school level, which will be a big change. It is also clear that the teachers' union, which has supported desegregation, will play a larger role in shaping school policies.

In the short run, though, a question remains whether the school administration will desegregate in good faith. On alternate days, Judge Garrity plays philosopher king or Brer Rabbit confronting the tar baby. If he stays above it all, he can't be sure that anything is happening; if he steps in, he's engulfed, handling everything from pupil assignments to purchases of walkie-talkies. He has considered putting the school system into some form of receivership, and it may come to that. (He's already done that at one school.) The imperviousness of the administration and the small, dangerous wiles of the politicians only make up a fraction of the city's problem, but they give it a particularly local twist. Social forces outside the schools, years of conflicting demands for compensatory education and desegregation, the fears of the whites, the bitterness and frustration of the blacks, have all gone to creating a war no one can win.

The Bicentennial is on many people's minds. The contrast between its ideals and the frightening actualities of the present, and between memories of recent decades of relative peace and the present turmoil, all feed a sense of loss. There is something elegaic in the air, as when Judge Garrity writes in the past tense, "Boston became the bridge not only to liberty but to the ideal of the free, universal and inclusive public school." The anti-busing people speak a nostalgic language of rights and redress for the wrongs of an oppressive government. Black activists and the lawyers for the NAACP are fighting for rights, liberty and an ideal of schooling, although they don't have much to be nostalgic about. To the worried whites and blacks who are not activists, people who live in very similar three deckers and projects, there doesn't seem all that much to celebrate.

It is a bad time; many feel it to be the worst of times. The memory of the bitter ethnic and religious wars of the past is fading, and people have forgotten that Boston's history in the 19th and 20th centuries is a story of chronic, sometimes violent conflict. The struggles between Yankee Protestant Republicans and Irish Catholic Democrats formed the major fault line, but successive cleavages opened up as each set of older groups faced each wave of newcomers: Italians, French-Canadians, Jews, Portuguese and now blacks and Puerto Ricans. Blacks go back a long way in Boston, but their numbers were small until the 1950s. Within the memory of many citizens, Roxbury was a mainly Jewish section of town; it is littered with abandoned synagogues. Now the older ethnic quarrels take second place to race, without, however, disappearing.

Our pleasant legends about schools in the past lead us to ignore the fact that they, too, were involved in the wars. These days a number of what are sometimes called "revisionist" historians are looking into the past of institutions like schools, prisons and asylums. The revisionists have only a mood in common; the mood is skeptical. They peer at the motives of the founding fathers of such public institutions, and find them more mixed than many of us think. American traditions of reform and institution-building have a dark side, it turns out. It might interest Bicentennial visitors who come across the statue of Horace Mann to know that Mann cuts a rather different figure in the historians' accounts from the public figure portrayed in earlier boosterish histories of public education. He begins to look more like Melville's monomaniacal Captain Ahab than the benign figure of reform legend.

In a sense, Mann and the founding fathers of many of our urban institutions were obsessed by what we now call the crisis of the cities, which has been going on much longer, at least in the older Eastern cities, than we generally imagine. Boston's schools in the 1830s and 1840s were a first venture in what we now speak of, rather grandly, as the framing of social policy. They were one facet of a complex institutional response to modernity, part of a whole array of institutions designed to redress the imbalances generated by unchecked economic growth and technological change.

From the beginning, city schools were perceived as an answer to problems generated by industry, technology, divisions of labor and new impersonal urban institutions. The reformers hoped they would take up the slack for other, supposedly failing older institutions, such as the family, the village and the church. They intended schools to renew a sense of community in cities where community was felt to be collapsing. Building common schools was a real achievement in cities whose inhabitants found it very difficult to act collectively. Nineteenth century civic reformers found it hard to wrest services such as water, sewers and even police forces from a profoundly individualistic culture given over to a frenzy of capitalist enterprise. In the chaotic cities whose slums appalled foreign visitors like Charles Dickens, schools were sometimes the only collective and communal enterprise Americans seemed able to agree on.

Modernity made Americans strangers to each other

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in two ways whose consequences we still live with. First the industrial revolution made strangers out of country and village people who were going to have to work in factories, new realms of social distance and divided labor. And second native Yankees confronted a flood of alien immigrants. Richard Titmuss once said that the central question of social policy is what people in modern societies are willing to do for strangers. In America the crucial fact about industrialization is that it coincided with immigration. Americans were doubly strange because they belonged to different social classes and because they were drawn from different countries and races.

The reformers who faced this twin urban crisis tried to make the schools into what one historian aptly calls "cultural factories"; they were supposed to right imbalances, restore lost community and keep order. Schools were also part of the social machinery with which the Yankees attempted to deal with the threat the strangers posed to their rule. Among other functions, schools served as poverty programs to shape up the children of successive waves of strangers.

In reacting against the legends that paint education as the pillar of democracy, the revisionists show the power of the American love-hate relationship with schools. Once, implausibly, schools were thought to be all-powerful agents of social good. Now, in the revisionists' hands, the old legend gets turned on its head and the schools sound, equally implausibly, like malevolent elite conspiracies against democracy. (An echo, perhaps, of the curdled nationalism that imagines sin to be uniquely American.) The revisionists generally think of themselves as radicals, yet they usually write elite history, in the sense that they concentrate on the motives of the Yankee reformers. They tell the story as a melodrama in which elites work their wicked will on the passive immigrant masses. We still lack an adequate history of what ordinary people made of schools, but there are bits and pieces of a more complex and interesting story at hand. It is significant, I think, that the first articulate rationale for public education in places like Boston and New York came from the working class political parties whose vigor so impressed Karl Marx. Where the elite reformers stressed the role of schools in promoting social order, the workers argued that the citizens of a republic needed education to preserve their liberties against the threats of power and privilege. (Early on, workers were less enthusiastic about the high schools, which seemed to them to benefit the middle class.) You would not gather from the revisionists that immigrant outsiders themselves placed a high value on education, and badly wanted schools to do their part in helping raise literate children. Nor would you gather that immigrants wanted schools to Americanize their children—only on their terms, and not those of the Yankee elites. But they did.

The reformers did want to impose their values on the children of Boston's strangers. Yet to desire is not to succeed. The dreams of social and cultural control through schools often turned out to be pipe dreams. The truth is that big city schools rarely worked well, for good or evil purposes. Throughout much of their history, for example, they have not been able even to catch up with the numbers of immigrant children whose parents clamored to enroll them. Schools excluded the poorest and most unruly of what were called "the dangerous classes." They enrolled the children of the deserving poor, when there was room.

Being radicals who are skeptical of today's politics, the revisionists tend to ignore city politics in the past, which is a great mistake. For while politics in the past, like politics today, is often a charade and a comic opera, it is also important. Our city history is not a tedious melodrama in which the elite villains have always had their way. It is the story of conflict, in which the "masses," far from being passive, fought back. It is among other things the story of how ordinary people acted on their own behalf, battling with some successes and some defeats against narrow definitions of what it is to be American. Often, as Diane Ravitch has shown in *The Great School Wars*, conflicts over city politics and institutions like schools were the arenas in which the hopes of the immigrants confronted the fears of the Yankees.

Thus the schools stood in an ambiguous relationship to the city's strangers. An extraordinary consensus emerged as to the value of schooling but, like the larger ideological consensus of American society as a whole—the common agreement on the sanctity of private property and the Constitution—it masked profound conflict over who would define the purposes and content of public education and whose definition of America it would serve. (The awkwardness of those Bicentennial TV programs about our past derives from the fact that a central issue has always been who would be included as one of "us.") The growth of the Catholic parochial schools—still a critical, if generally ignored part of Boston's educational scene, enrolling just under a quarter of the city's schoolchildren—was a response to the Protestant nativism preached in the public schools. The creation of separate Catholic schools marked an extreme of religious dissent from bigoted versions of the American consensus as great as that of black separatists and community control advocates in recent years.

When schools insulted outsiders they fought back; the result was the school wars that Diane Ravitch chronicled for New York. (Boston's wars remain to be described.) Sometimes elites and reformers won, as in the successful effort to centralize the big city systems whose rigidities plague us today, and sometimes immigrants and outsiders won, as in the establishment of ward and neighborhood systems, the hiring of immigrant teachers, or in the capture of city hall and the machinery of local government. As the fortunes of

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the wars shifted, power was reshuffled and to different political jurisdictions; and as they won or lost, cycles of separatist and integrationist political impulses touched the outsiders.

It is at this point in the story that blacks, sensing that historic parallels are about to be drawn, demur. Such parallels have a heavy symbolic weight these days. Blacks insist that their story, the record of their oppression, is different. And these days, many of the social historians agree. In his admirable book, *The Other Bostonians*, Stephen Thernstrom has talked about the various strangers who struggled for a living in 19th and 20th-century Boston. Many things he describes are novel and fascinating: the high rates of social and geographical mobility belie our picture of the past as more stable than today. (To read historians like Thernstrom is to find out that urban malaise was probably never less than it is today; in many periods it looks decidely worse.) Thernstrom asks why different immigrant groups rose from the bottom at such very different rates, the Irish and the Italians who now predominate in Boston being slower than many others. The reasons are complicated: a mix of history, culture, religion, previous city experience and a good many other factors that Thernstrom and others have yet to explain. The historic position of blacks is striking. In a city of rising immigrants, their place lay squarely and permanently on the bottom. They are the only group that for a long sweep of Boston's history looks like a permanent proletariat, certainly the only group in American life requiring a national political movement to begin to alter its historic status. In recent decades, Thernstrom cautiously concedes, their status has changed somewhat. From World War II on, a combination of prosperity and political activism did produce gains. For this period, Thernstrom guesses, it might be possible to draw some parallels between blacks and other groups. Most of the time the parallels don't hold.

Nineteenth century blacks in Boston and elsewhere struggled first for families and churches, then for freedom, then for schools. It seems to be an axiom of educational history that strangers and dissenters—those barred from formal educational institutions—must put all the more stress on informal ways of passing on their culture and tradition, such as families, synagogues and churches. The struggle for families, the social historians are showing, was far more successful than the social scientists who speak of the legacy of slavery and black family pathology generally realize. The long struggle for access to formal schooling came next. It is partly a consequence of this history that faith in education tends to be even stronger among blacks than among other groups. In point of cold statistics, education did not serve blacks all that well. Schools often kept them out, North and South; the separate education they did get was radically unequal, and premised on racist assumptions. Educators offered them a secondhand version of somebody else's idea of practicality and vocationalism. Many blacks got schooling without making gains in other realms. Thernstrom points out that the low standing of Boston's blacks is not explained by a lack of education. In 1950, for example, Boston's blacks had more education than the Irish, Italians and French Canadians, yet were lower in occupational status.

It is tempting to conclude from this that the traditional black preoccupation with access to schooling was misguided, a diversion from more fundamental issues. But that would be a mistake, I think. Blacks inherit more than their share of American faith in schools; but in the past this was less grounded in naive idealism than in a shrewd assessment that schools were the only game in town that would let them in, albeit on condescending racist terms. Schools kept blacks out and oppressed them, but they also served as havens, turfs and sources of jobs. The reasons for black separatism have been truly complex. (Reasons for white support of black separatism have been fairly simple.) There is a complex, dialectical quality to the whole story: segregated churches, for example, led to the spiritual autonomy of black Protestantism, and segregated schools and churches provided a base for those who, at different points in the story, led the attacks on slavery and segregation. The old dialectic between integration and separation has deep roots in the history of Boston's black community. The fascinating doubleness of the tale lies in the fact that the intentions of white society have never wholly controlled the use blacks have made of the racist institutions offered them.

Schools were the way up for black leaders and professionals, and they seem to have become more important in today's professionalized world of credentials and degrees. One crucial fact presses on the whole school situation today in Boston, illuminating another difference between immigrants of the past and the urban poor today: the lack of adequate work. It was not education that lifted most people in most groups—although some did use the schools to rise—but jobs. The immigrant kid who left school became a worker; black students who leave today are part of the unemployed dropout problem. When all the long, moralizing analyses of group character and social pathology are rehearsed, the difference in the past between those who were able to climb out of the dangerous classes and those who weren't probably boils down to the availability of steady work.

Schools in the past, as today, were arenas of conflict; they were, as they are, more accessible to outsiders than most other institutions. The same ambiguous quality—the legitimacy conferred by access—that pervades the American political system suffuses the history of education. Politics and the politics of the schools have mediated the symbols of ethnic, religious and, in recent times, racial conflict. It's exasperating to see the way the ethnic, religious and racial agenda has

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consistently overshadowed the pursuit of economic justice and a redistribution of power. The responsiveness of schools, like the responsiveness of politics itself, has certainly worked to defuse class conflict. The revisionists and neo-Marxists are quite right to point out that in many ways the traditional focus on politics and education is a poor substitute for fundamental economic change. The school wars never challenged the mainly economic values and priorities of the society; and thus in many respects schools have been marginal to the main business of the American past, which was business. And in classic form, the historic dilemmas of the schools reflect the problems of all social service institutions in an unequal, competitive capitalist society. The egalitarian promise conflicts with the realities of inequality.

Yet to the historic actors the symbols involved in urban politics and school wars have been fundamental, sometimes worth dying for. Religion, ethnicity and race overlay and complicate the class politics of American cities. What makes the educational history of Boston terribly complicated is the fact that to the participants, the poor and the working class, as well as the elites, the central fact about American life was the diversity of its peoples, and not the existence of clear-cut, homogeneous, counterpoised social classes.

This urban history has left a legacy (of strengths and weaknesses) that affects life in the city to this day. The main strength is the historic leverage that successive groups have been able to use to their own advantage. In fighting back, the strangers used the mechanisms of American city politics, including school politics, to force the culture to adopt a wider and more pluralistic definition of itself. Each group has taken over political tradition, the language of rights and the machinery of local politics and reworked them to its own purposes. The result, for all the bigotry that has surfaced in Boston today, is a more pluralistic society than many 19th-century Americans would have thought possible or desirable. (Because the central Boston cleavage pitted Yankees and the Irish against each other for so long, Boston's rather weak civic culture has been much more of a late-comer to urban pluralism than cities where a diversity of groups emerged earlier.) To describe all this is not to say, in the words of the banquet orators, that the system was sound. There was nothing automatic about what happened. It was not an abstract, benign "system," but people acting on their own behalf who changed things. Ruling groups never sent out engraved invitations to outsiders; strangers forced their way in.

One legacy from this past is a style of politics that stresses symbols. From the standpoint of jobs and bread and butter economics, it can look like a politics of shadows, devoid of substance. In an earlier Boston the Irish working class was captivated by symbols of national and religious identity. These were never empty symbols. They were the sort of symbols by which, all over the world, people live and die. Yet the power of symbols made the Boston Irish here, as in Ireland, vulnerable to shadow politics; Irish and Yankee elites in Boston often worked out symbolic accommodations at the expense of the Irish poor. Now the symbols are racial, and once again they seem quite fundamental, but a certain lack of substance remains. "Ireland will get her freedom, and you will still break stones," Yeats had his Parnell say to the cheering workman.

A history of school and city wars created in the long haul a more pluralistic, tolerant and egalitarian city culture than that of the past. It never produced anything quite like the legendary melting pot, but the city historian Sam Bass Warner, Jr is right to argue in *Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City* that elements of a common urban culture emerged. Working class voters in Boston and other cities may be far ahead of the country's leadership in recognizing the need for basic social change guaranteeing people jobs, homes, schools and adequate medical care. The way the present symbolic fight over the schools diverts everyone from such egalitarian goals gives one a sinking feeling that even the winners, if there are any, will end up breaking stones.

The history of the school wars got forgotten. In part it was forgotten because after the 1920s, when the main features of the present centralized and professionalized school systems were in place, it became plausible—though never entirely convincing—to think of schools as the apolitical province of neutral experts and professionals. Second and third generation immigrants forgot their parents' fight. For several decades, there was relative peace. The school machine ticked quietly. The revisionist historians are right to point to the enormous significance of the organizational changes that took place. Whatever else the progressive educational reformers left us—and their legacy is an ambiguous mixture indeed—it is clear that they were cementing professions and bureaucracies that have often taken on a life of their own. And it is clear that the world they built is very different from the highly political world of the 19th-century schools. Yet, as we are finding out in a new era of school wars, schools are still a very political matter. The present politics of education is so complex precisely because it represents a fusion of older political styles, traditions and institutions, with the professionalized realm of bureaucracies, experts, courts, unions, national educational policies and statistics. Some would argue that the new professionalized order has totally usurped the old, making a mockery of the democratic machinery of local school governance. There is a good deal of truth in this: Judge Garrity's constituency of lawyers and other federal judges is not the same as the constituency that just elected Mrs. Louise Day Hicks to the Boston city council. And yet the political role of the

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schools in Boston today—as the arena of confrontation between the city's older groups and new—does bear a resemblance to the role of the schools in the less complicated and professionalized past, just as the battles over community control in New York City bore an eerie resemblance to earlier school wars. Much has changed; there is no doubt that in many areas of education there is a growing chasm between the machinery of local democratic governance and the highly professionalized, often national forces that play on the schools. But some things remain the same.

Historically, symbols of religion and ethnicity and race take precedence over those of class. This is true today in Boston, where many people have the feeling that what is going on in the schools is largely symbolic; the have-littles and the have-nothings are set to fighting over bones without any meat on them, while the haves look on and shake their heads. Class emerges when people speak resentfully of the elites who send children to private schools and make decisions about busing.

The common culture of Boston is plagued by two historic weaknesses that run from the past to the present. One is the continuing acceptance of the legitimacy of a society run as a lottery with big winners and big losers. The ready acceptance of enormous differential rewards for the privileged has crippled the culture's egalitarianism. The egalitarianism of American life is real, but it easily turns into what Richard Hofstadter once called an equality of greed, rather than fraternity. This is why the fitful Populist impulse of this society is so vulnerable to entrepreneurial radicalism, slogans and reactionary styles of populism that attack everything but corporate privilege and the enormous disparities of wealth and power. Reactionary populism has a particular susceptibility to the second great historic threat to urban culture: its racism.

The acceptance of gross inequality and racism both frame the current crisis, which involves another set of strangers. Once again the symbols are crucial, and far from empty, yet there is not even any guarantee of solid improvements in education, let alone in the economic status of either working class blacks or whites in the city. Beyond teaching staffs, schools do not have all that many jobs to offer. They cannot create new jobs or break down the walls of residential segregation or repair existing housing, or build new homes. They can give blacks in the city the exact amount of symbolic and educational leverage they have won through the history of the court decisions in the 21 years since the famous Brown case, but at a potential political cost and a potential sacrifice of real Populist possibilities to reactionary Populist demagoguery. Boston is twisting in the ambiguous momentum this society has taken since the Brown decision.

Things appeared less complicated in 1954. When the Rev. Oliver Brown tried to enroll his daughter in an all-white school three blocks from home in Topeka, school authorities instead bused her to an all-black school 21 blocks away. The Rev. Brown sued, and ultimately the Supreme Court declared that separate schools were inherently unequal and therefore a violation of black children's constitutional rights under the Fourteenth Amendment. The Brown decision and its successors struck crippling blows to the Southern system of dual schools. The struggle for desegregation in the South led to many regional and national gains for blacks.

Contrary to what much current defeatist thinking about education says, schools can act as powerful instruments of social change. Not by themselves, of course, but in alliance with other social forces. The Brown decision shows this. Together with post-war prosperity and the civil rights movement, the events touched off by the Brown decision led to the destruction of many historic obstacles to equality, altering the terms of the country's most enduring dilemma, the relations between the races. Brown helped sweep away the legal underpinning of the South's Jim Crow system. It was part of a whole series of modernizing forces that transformed today's South into something very different from a one-crop, single party region gripped by poverty and racial oppression. The federal civil rights acts—particularly the voter registration laws—are altering the political face of the region. Southern public education is now more integrated than Northern education. In some parts of the South, as politicians like Reuben Askew and Jimmy Carter have noted, the school issue has disappeared. And North and South, the black middle class—especially new professionals and white collar workers—has expanded. American society is far less monolithically racist than it was. Yet the Brown decision and the civil rights movement that both prompted it and fed on it were failures, too, in important respects whose consequences we are living with today. Neither changed the lot of the poor all that much. Schools in the North are still very segregated, and some of the larger Southern cities are resegregating along patterns familiar in the North. (At the time of the Brown decision no large city had a majority black population; the vast folk migration of rural Southern blacks to the Northern cities was still underway.) Everywhere in the country residential segregation has increased; the trend toward increasingly black cities and mainly white suburbs continues.

Thus the balance sheet on Brown, like that of the civil rights movement in general, has to be complex. Sometimes you hear it summed up in an argument between the generations. "Remember how bad things used to be, how far we have come," the old timers say. Against which the young insist: "Look at how bad things still are." Both have a point.

Part Two of Mr. Featherstone's article will appear next week.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on theater

Acting in Williams

The Glass Menagerie (Circle in the Square). I love Pamela Payton-Wright. I saw her first in January 1966 in a Milwaukee production of *Mother Courage* as the mute Kattrin. She brought to the role such an immediate shining *faith* that I remember whipping out my program after her first scene to learn the name of this burning brand of truth. Payton-Wright had talent, which is a handy asset but in fact not so uncommon. She had personality, which is a big extra help, though not essential. (I had the "Payton-Wright" reaction later that year when I first saw Dustin Hoffman Off Broadway, and how much personality has he?) At the heart of fine acting is our conviction that, out of a large territory of powers, one or some of the provinces are being devoted to a particular instance. This is true even in great roles: Olivier's Oedipus was not all of Olivier. The larger Payton-Wright touched the lesser Kattrin like a magician touching a mortal.

I've seen her since in a variety of roles: the moody adolescent in that unbearable play about gamma rays and marigolds, Lavinia in *Mourning Becomes Electra*, a Swedish maid in a foul Schisgal farce called *All Over Town*, and some TV. (She is in *The Adams Chronicles* coming on PBS.) Always I have felt proprietary about her, irked because I couldn't see her in the many good roles she has played in resident theaters, pleased with her range, anxious for her progress. A couple of months ago I noted that she was in a two-character play at the Public Theater and that she was announced for a subsequent revival of *The Glass Menagerie*—as Laura, of course. So I went to see the former as "backdrop" for the latter.

Jesse and the Bandit Queen by David Freeman was yet another mythopoeic work about the Bad Men and Women of the Old West, in this case Jesse James and Belle Starr. Payton-Wright went through a number of imaginative transformations from Belle to Jesse himself, and was lusty, flavorful and strong throughout. For me, viewing it egocentrically, she was showing me her earthy side before she went into Williams' crippled recluse.

Now in *The Glass Menagerie* she fulfills the phrase. Her Laura is far, far beyond any I have seen, including Julie Haydon in the original production. Take the simple mechanical matter of the limp. Payton-Wright doesn't clump around: we *discover* in the first scene that she is lame because of a slight deviance in the rhythm of her walk. On more subtle ground, her shyness in the role has nothing to do with conscious sensitivity, it's grounded in a kind of angelic terror. Her lovely fragile quality is not the result of airy views of herself but of her mediation with the world, her rescue from it of a few things she can love, including her brother. Her performance is an eloquently quiet statement of involuntary exile in our midst.

What has really been revealed in Payton-Wright's career so far, under the growth in range and power, is growth in her self. Like other artists, actors can fulfill only what they are capable of including. Flaubert's familiar *"Madame Bovary, c'est moi"* is, in some measure, as true of actors as of writers. A principal trouble with many actors, often gifted ones, is that their selves atrophy, do not grow or perceptibly shrink. One of the marks of true seriousness in an actor is this apprehensible growth of self.

I cite only one of Payton-Wright's beauties in this play, harvest of that growth. After the Gentleman Caller kisses her, then pulls away ashamed, she follows him with arms still uplifted, forgiving him and inviting him again. He tells her that he is engaged to another girl. She stands for a moment transfixed. Then her upraised hands lead her to the little table on which the glass menagerie stands. She picks up the injured unicorn to give him as a souvenir. That moment of hush, in which she is transformed from possible lover back to her previous self, in which the future becomes the past, without grudge and with affection, is a gift that Payton-Wright has given me, and I thank her.

The other actors are less ingratiating. Maureen Stapleton, the Amanda (not her first time in the part), is a "recognition" actress. When she deals in close-at-hand symbols of dailiness and of, in both senses, vulgarity, she can be strong. When she has to range outside the easily recognizable of her life and her audience's, she is less certain. Here, as an epitome of a vanishing culture, she has more muscle than manner. Amanda is only one more nagging mother unless she has, and insidiously uses, charm; and charm is not Stapleton's forte. At the matinée I saw she was carrying a cane because of an injured leg, but there was no hint of a better performance constricted. Rip Torn, the Tom, begins with a good dark wildness but soon becomes largely vocal, mouthing his lines as if they are epithets he is flinging at the play and us. Paul Rudd is colorless as the Caller—none of the faded high-school-hero glamour that Michael Moriarty had in the recent TV film with Katharine Hepburn. Theodore Mann, who directed, has little music in him. The whole production is unmolded, "unheard."

Yet the play survives its mistreatment. To write as well for actors as Williams does is almost to be independent of them. Just speak Williams' words and *something* will happen. But there's more. Although *The Glass Menagerie* is smaller than *A Streetcar Named Desire*, it is uniquely lovely: one of the few plays I know whose drama comes, successfully, from the opposition of mood and world. The story is negligible. The agon is between a lyric poem and a context of the passing of time.

Sweet Bird of Youth (Harkness). Survival

Films Worth Seeing

Dog Day Afternoon. Al Pacino incisive as homosexual bank robber in grimy-comic, finally fuzzy factual story.

The Magic Flute. One can disagree with Ingmar Bergman's concept of Mozart's opera, but his filming of it is genius.

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest. Jack Nicholson is tremendous and every actor is good in this dubious allegory set in a mental hospital.

The Sunshine Boys. Walter Matthau and George Burns, as two veteran vaudevillians, make you collapse with laughter until Neil Simon's script collapses.

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is less certain with this Williams play. It was clearly defective when it first appeared in 1959, and it doesn't get better. The first act, minus the doctor's scene at the beginning, would make an excellent short play: ribald, racy and sad. The two long scenes between the aging film star and the stud are excellent, creating a crazy cosmos in that tackily luxurious hotel room. But when the play moves into its latter strophes of lost pure love, with its counterpoint of political bossism and violence, it is creaky, badly written, and tedious. Character, not plot, is Williams' strength.

In that first act Irene Worth shows again and further that she is a wonderful actress. I've been watching her a lot longer (naturally) than Payton-Wright. I saw her first in 1943 in a Broadway something called *The Two Mrs. Carrolls*, with Elizabeth Bergner, in which she seemed a prodigy. Then she disappeared into England, and a short seven years later she returned a leading English actress in Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*. I can't list all the widely differing roles I've seen her in (a small fraction of her career)—I mention only one: a thrilling Io in Robert Lowell's *Prometheus Bound* at the Yale Rep in 1967. And now she's funny! True, she could hardly (in a sense) have *dared* to fail in a part so suited to her rich voice, imperial style and dusky sexuality, but she makes the most of it—in an excellent dissolute-elegant comic performance.

Christopher Walken worries me. He, too, ought to have been excellent—Chance is as right for him as the woman is for Worth; but he bobbles it. Walken is marvelously gifted, and has given at least two exquisite performances—Caligula in Camus' play at the Yale Rep and Jean in Strindberg's *Miss Julie* at the Long Wharf. But sometimes he is clumsy and superficial, as in his Macbeth at the Newhouse. Here he starts excitingly, but as he goes on, fine points get blurred and he rises to the surface of the part, relying on his vocal vigor and cat-like grace, instead of employing them in his work. He has everything to be a fine actor except a central insistent artistic intelligence—or maybe it's just a lack of that continuing personal growth that Payton-Wright shows. At the least he needs a director who can help him, and Edwin Sherin, lurid and clumsy, is not the man—not here, at any rate.

The rest of the cast is awful.

On Modernism

Modernism is ours and we are—we still hope to be—"modernists." It is the culture on which students feed, for modernism has been our tradition since the early 20th century. In fact modernism has by now absorbed so many earlier cultures that large numbers of people know Dante only through Eliot, African sculpture through Picasso, Oriental painting through the post impressionists.

Yet there is this nostalgia—in movies about the '20s, in time-conscious dresses and hats, in the perpendicular figure, in the equally perpendicular lines of Art Deco. These things have never really disappeared from our culture. They are fashions just a little less fixed in our minds by now than *The Waste Land*, *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, cubism, functionalism, free verse, Gertrude Stein, *The Great Gatsby*, Jimmy Walker, the corruptibility of American politicians, the unpredictability of the stock market.

What are we nostalgic for? Why so many commemorations, appeals to the past, imitations of what has never really disappeared from our lives? Nostalgia is never for what we have lost, but for that part of ourselves, like childhood, that we no longer understand. Nostalgia is the effort of the too-conscious present to understand itself in the light of the unconscious past. Nostalgia is the effort to rejoin ourselves to ourselves—when the effort is in one sense too late.

Still the nostalgia is obsessive. In the ebbing of the 20th century, it is clear that we are drifting farther and farther away from the context in which modernism arose more than 75 years ago. We are in the era of the Big State, the organized military-technological complex. The imperialism of the West is being replaced by primitive authoritarian socialism. Ours is a world of incessant nationalistic, tribal wars and revolutionary disruptions, of a slavish culture organized not only through the "media" but somehow *for* them. We are getting farther and farther away from the world, in which a self-centered, white, individualist, still "elitist" culture thought of itself as the center of existence.

The revolutions of the 20th century—in literature, painting, music, architecture, photography, movies—represent the *technical* breakthrough in language, style, form, of an elite essentially conservative and even traditionalist. It was often profoundly anti-democratic in its politics, contemptuous of the as-yet *unformed* mass taste. As the modernist revolution became popularized and academicized, became the sophisticated *"att-i-tude,"* it in fact became (like gourmet cooking, Picasso prints, professionalism in the seeking of sexual pleasure) part of middle-class professional society. The intellectuals became not the creators of culture, but the professional middlemen and eager consumers of modernist culture. Unlike Eliot, Pound, Stravinsky, Joyce, who were conservative in everything except their talents, the intellectuals as a class *and* mass believed that modernism applied to everything in their lives and to the reordering of society. What an illusion!

But this is to get ahead of our story. Modernism, now our only real tradition in the arts, is the poetry of Eliot, Pound, Frost, Stevens, Cummings, the novels of Hemingway and Fitzgerald and Faulkner, the plays of O'Neill, the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, the movies as a major narrative form, the modern dance, ballet, the comic strip, the musical comedy. But though all this is ours and many of its forms became national only in the '20s, it is chilling to see how little the increasingly despotic society of the 1970s resembles the "careless" society of the 1920s.

This is where nostalgia comes in. We are not looking for the *language* of freedom and experimentation, in which the culture of rock, the post-Hollywood films, open poetry, abstract expressionism, action art, pop art, psychedelic art, women's literature, sexual revolution, are all rich. We are looking for the *substance*. We are looking for the spirit of the founders, the reasoning behind certain fundamental achievements that we have incorporated

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in our own minds so firmly that we are now suspicious of the contemporary. Like Hugh Kenner in his brilliantly arbitrary book on modernism, *A Homemade World*, we say that Faulkner is the "last" novelist. The modernism that fought so hard to be heard—but that was long ago—is often our last word, our only word.

The 1920s were so powerful in establishing the new taste that even Melville, Dickinson, Henry Adams, Whitman did not become popular until then. The Russians have had practically no one to read since Babel, Biely, Mandelstam, Mayakovsky, Nabokov—the typical Russian experimental writers of the 1920s. Kafka died in 1924, Proust in 1922, Virginia Woolf and Joyce early in World War II. They are still our saints and heroes of modernism. Even our more "original" magazines, like *Time* and *The New Yorker*, founded by literary intellectuals of the 1920s, still show as their main qualities a feeling for "style," for wit, that makes their writers regard themselves as "artists" of journalism.

Wherever one looks, our "advanced," highbrow culture is modernism, while our modernist idea of culture is that formed by the anti-institutional spirits of the 1920s. Yet these founding fathers of the modern style were as a group profoundly conservative, traditionalist, offensively reactionary to our liberal way of thinking. Their pioneer audacities, from William James' "stream of consciousness" and Freud's interpretation of the stories-we-tell-ourselves-in-our-dreams to Gertrude Stein's practice in writing of a repetition essentially oral and Eliot's experiments with a schizophrenic persona in *Prufrock*, were extensions and modifications of an already established line of technical interest. They were based on the upper-class individual whose consciousness was sacred to himself.

We no longer understand the modernism that makes us up, for we are egalitarian in a primitive sense. We believe that all cultures are inherently equal. From this has followed the belief that the thrust of personality is enough to make a work of art. Art has become a matter of tuning into oneself. Art is a "communication," just as "love" long ago became a form of expression.

The founders of modernism thought differently about the virtue of the individual and the necessity of art. What bothered them about society was not that it was unjust to the many, but that it was messy, without respect for authority and ritual. Essential supports had disappeared with the emergence of mass society and the decay of religion. The modernists were most against the modern age. Kafka was shocked by all forms of swearing and profanity. He considered them desecrations of language.

Pornography today and all its more pretentious equivalents exist in order to satirize passion. Perhaps sexism in literature and art and films exists in order to make passion immoral. Eliot said that poetry is not an expression of emotion but an escape from emotion, but that only those who have emotion know what it is to need to escape from it. Eliot seems to have thought of society as an ideal work of art, an imaginary country that can only exist, like More's Utopia, through the written word. That is not our idea of society. Society has simply become humankind at the end of the 20th century, innumerable and voracious. It can no more account for its acts, or be held accountable, than can the animal kingdom. Humankind has returned, morally, to a state of nature.

But here is Eliot in the 1920s, hailing Joyce's *Ulysses*: "It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." Eliot, himself no great admirer of the traditional English novel of middle-class lives, was excited by the power of myth in *Ulysses*. The significance of myth is that it is recurrent and universal. All mythologies are profoundly conservative readings of man repeating the same story, because confined within the same limitations of human nature.

The predominant religion of the Orient today is Leninism. Against the background of this authoritarian reordering of the masses, it is fascinating to recall the conservatism in art matters of Lenin and Mao, those great modernists of *political* revolution. Lenin had no patience with music later than Beethoven, and distrusted even Beethoven because he left Lenin unfit for stark revolutionary action. Lenin also detested Mayakovsky and other avant-garde Russian poets. Mao, visitors to his study have noticed, still keeps scrolls of classical Chinese poetry and seems to be the one poet in China who is allowed to practice this officially forbidden ritualistic art. Hitler screamed that all modern art was "degenerate," but proved himself the most terrible destroyer of the established order. So Lenin and Mao have alone succeeded in what Eliot called "controlling, ordering, giving shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." Totalitarian socialism takes on the same external look of order and control that Eliot thought he saw in the middle ages, that Ezra Pound attributed to American history before the Civil War. The lack of this in Ireland led Yeats to call for an Irish fascism.

The continuing blood bath in Northern Ireland is not what Yeats had in mind. Lawrence's vision of the superman has not been taken up satisfactorily by Norman Mailer. The "usury" hated by Pound was not eliminated by Hitler's elimination of six million Jews. Joyce's conception of a single day, a single moment in historic time as the perfect classical subject for a great modern novel, has not eliminated the urgency of Stephen Dedalus' outcry: "History is the nightmare from which I am trying to awaken." Modernist art, the revolution of the word, the fabulous rise in our technical consciousness of objects and materials, all the new ways of seeing that we associate with modern painting and movies, of rhythm that we associate with jazz and atonalism, the growth of a poetry of the vernacular, of a novel-telling technique that is as agile as the polymorphic sense of time that came in with the enthronement of personal consciousness as our greatest subject—all this has been a revolution in itself. And meanwhile another revolution has been going on all the time—the most concentrated systematic effort of mind in recorded history—the technical revolution in all possible ways of encoding knowledge and distributing it. Everywhere before our eyes the human mind is learning new skills as if there were a new babyhood to the race.

Technology lords it everywhere over the old-fashioned, art-educated intellectuals brought up on modernism. Technology and bureaucracy, aided by all the sciences of manipulation and propaganda, mass culture and mass emotion, make up our public drama. Billions of people are being whipped into shape at any cost to the so-called individual, as in China; or are being left to die in the class wars, civil wars, merciless political wars, of Southeast Asia; or are left to starve and die on the pavements of Calcutta and Bombay. Everywhere in the West there is panic, the most obvious slackening of will and hope and faith in anything more than

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the ever-more urgent whiplash of the money motive. We are under the gun. As the century drives to a close in a frenzy of race wars, nuclear threat, mass starvation, the demonic threat that there are just too many people on earth, our imagination has been dazzled by mankind's first view of earth itself from outer space. We have a sense of unlimited creativeness and destructiveness that makes the arch-individualists and culture-snobs of the 1920s seem archaic.

They are our founders, our master guides still. But modernism was and remains an upper-class revolution, a necessary perception of the radical forms necessary to guarantee the continuity of our traditional culture. That culture is no longer believed in by those who still live in it. The masses still have no access to it and can hardly have a reason for finding one now. The present age has shown itself all too revolutionary, disruptive and uncontainable to be "modernist."

The Complete Modernist, if such a type ever existed, thought that he could do without tradition. He was, in Pound's phrase, to make all things new. But beyond anything that Eliot could have visualized in 1928, the irreversible, ever-accelerating domination of technology has persuaded people, now more than ever in the so-called undeveloped world, that their one chance to live like human beings is through the authoritarian organization of society. This alone "makes all things new"—at least for a season, as Hitler for a while seemed to create a New Order in Europe and as Mao has definitely created a new society and a New Man in China.

Against this background of prodigious social destruction and human manipulation, the 1920s, especially in America, now seem the last word in the innocence of the pleasure principle. All those delightful young people finally making their way to the big city from the small town! All that romantic jazz! It belongs to another world. But it was a world in which a few with better eyes than most saw that one day the whole gorgeous machine could go smash. Or as Henry Adams put it, America was the perfect subject for "scientific history, for here man was at last in sight of his own end."

Alfred Kazin

Alfred Kazin's most recent book is *Bright Book of Life: American Novelists & Storytellers from Hemingway to Mailer* (Atlantic Monthly Press).

Books Considered

Selected Letters of James Joyce ed. by Richard Ellmann

(Viking; $18.95, paper, $5.95)

The first collection of James Joyce's letters, edited in 1957 by his aging friend and authorized commentator, Stuart Gilbert, proved a rather desultory job. Meanwhile Richard Ellmann, in preparation for his masterly biography, had tracked down and sifted out some twice as many more. These—including the notably detailed series addressed to Joyce's closest confidant over the years, his brother Stanislaus—were published as two supplementary volumes in 1966. Some day, Professor Ellmann promises us, there will be a complete edition. What he offers at the moment is a one-volume selection, re-edited when necessary and ordered in duly chronological sequence. We may well regret that, at the present price, we still miss out on the photographs that illuminated his previous volumes.

If these *Selected Letters* add up to somewhat less than a third of Joyce's correspondence already in print, they are interestingly augmented by 10 letters hitherto unprinted, as well as by the inclusion of passages deleted from or else modified in earlier transcription. There have been two reasons for these deletions and modifications. Not until 1970 could the British Museum remove its seal from Joyce's original letters to Harriet Weaver, his generous patroness and literary executor. On consulting the texts directly, the editor then discovered that her transcriptions had been shaded by her own modesty and consideration for the family. Several of the new letters will be useful to the elucidators of *Finnegans Wake*, since they undertook to dispel her bewilderment over the project she found herself sponsoring.

The second and more sweeping circumstance, which currently gives us two more of the letters to Joyce's wife and fills in many ellipses among the file, is not so much the passage of time itself as the fact that recent years have lifted most of the taboos on printability. Here we encounter the novel and problematic aspect of the book. Those four-letter words which instigated the early notoriety of *Ulysses* were employed quite sparingly and always in a context where their absence would have been unrealistic. Joyce himself, when speaking, when cursing, even when exchanging stories with fellow males, seems to have demurely avoided such locutions. "You have never heard me, have you, utter an unfit word before others," he wrote to Nora Barnacle.

Yet his letters to her were as dirty and filthy—the adjectives are his—as obsessed carnality could make them. They go far beyond the force of that "heterosexual magnetism" whose salubrious influence was acknowledged by both Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus. Sex is kinked with fantasies of sodomy, scatology, fetishism, voyeurism and sadomasochism. Here are the raw materials for Gerty MacDowall's exhibitionism, Molly Bloom's menstruation and her husband's cult of lingerie and the lash. But, in Joyce's writing for publication, attitudes and motives are firmly regulated by the fictive situation at hand. It may be the crowning irony of his ironic role that, whereas he was once banned for displaying candor in fiction, posthumous prestige has now stripped away the last vestiges of his personal privacy.

Clearly these once-privileged communications—which zigzag, as the writer freely admits, from the romantic and spiritual to the ugly and bestial—were never meant for other eyes than those of the two impassioned correspondents. Nora, at Joyce's urging, seems to have responded to him in kind, and her responses were evidently destroyed after they had served the obvious purpose of vicarious sexual excitation. Of course it is the biographer's duty to seek out and scrutinize all the available records pertaining to his subject, wherever they lead him, as Ellmann has faithfully and sensitively done. I for one, however, would be satisfied with his interpretation of the evidence; I find myself gagging when the fetid details are held up to my nose.

At least they might have been left in the archives waiting for the complete edition to set them into perspective, rather than disclosed as the central revelation of a highly selective book documenting Joyce's career for the general reader. The French have a phrase for this: documentation gone wild (*la fureur de l'inédit*). To be sure, it was Joyce himself who initiated the self-

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exposure, yet he always kept it under the strictest esthetic control. Intimacies can become offensive only when they cease to be intimate, when readers are invited to be voyeurs. What confronts us, though it may seem distasteful, is not abnormal; it seems more embarrassing than shocking; and words have lost the potential shock that they could hold in Joyce's day.

As a writer, Joyce was a past master of the deliberate verbal *frisson*. That effect can hardly be attained in a climate where the use of language is habitually loose and coarse, where the expletives go undeleted. Breathing such an atmosphere, as we do today, it is harder to understand the psychological impetus that had to break through curbs of inhibition by gestures of shamelessness. The testimony that comes through is to Joyce's emotional dependence on this "poor uneducated girl," whose faith in her ever-demanding husband—though not without its trials and tensions—was such that she scarcely bothered to read his writings and would not have understood much of them. His ardent promise that she would share his fame has reached its peculiar fulfillment.

Their elopement was not to become a marriage until they had passed 27 years together and two grown-up children were complicating their lives. Joyce was "not a very domestic animal"—or so he wrote to his Aunt Josephine, even though his many letters to her show an avid interest in family matters. Actually, while he spent his whole adult life moving from town to town and from one address to another, his domestic circle, reinforced by helpful admirers throughout, stabilized his European self-exile. "I loathe Ireland and the Irish," he declared to Nora; elsewhere he evinced his dislike of the French and Italians among whom he lived. Ambivalently he turned his renunciation of Dublin into the nostalgic theme of his life-work.

Ellmann speaks aptly of Joyce's "urge to renounce." This could be morally justified by the principle of *non serviam*, not to mention grinding poverty, enervating health, or the obstacles against publication that blocked him through mid-career. The solitary stance he took at 19, in his resounding letter to Ibsen, was sustained with admirable resolve—but not without continual demands on many friends, and intermittent suspicions which sometimes approached paranoia. In winnowing the correspondence down to the limits of a single volume, Ellmann has naturally retained the most autobiographical letters, incidentally leaving out most of the other correspondents. The consequence has been to narrow a narrowing focus, to stretch taut the twisted threads of singleminded endeavor and self-centered complaint.

James Joyce Charles Wells

Readers who look for artistic magnanimity or for curiosity about others had better turn to the epistles of Henry James. Joyce was almost wholly preoccupied with his own work, or with its turbulent fortunes. Consistently and characteristically, he declined Yeats' invitation to join the new Irish Academy; and if he congratulated Shaw on receiving the Nobel Prize, it was as a "fellow townsman." Triumphantly he tells how, at a dinner with Pound and Hemingway, he managed to deflect the conversation to himself. Invariably he declined all such requests as that of *La Revue Nouvelle* to join in a tribute to Hardy. He thanked Sean O'Faolain for an early novel with the chilling statement that he had not read any novels in any language for years.

Indeed, though *Huckleberry Finn* is echoed in *Finnegans Wake*, it now appears that—rather than read Mark Twain—Joyce depended on summaries by his son's American stepson. He did know *The Waste Land* well enough to parody it for Miss Weaver's amusement. But his sole allusion to Proust strikes a petulant note of jealous rivalry. Exceptionally he did exert himself on behalf of two other writers, each of whom had a special relation to him: Italo Svevo, his pupil in English, and Edouard Dujardin, his forerunner in using internal monologue. Both were older novelists, whose books had been half-forgotten. His campaign for the Irish tenor, John Sullivan, seems associated with his lifelong quest for his own identity, which in turn he identified with Ireland's.

These letters have their moments of Irish banter and, less frequently, Irish charm—particularly the fable devised for his only grandchild, Stephen. But most of his compassion and insight were reserved for his fiction. There his awareness of his own prickly nature emerges when Mulligan, allowed to make a riposte, calls Stephen Dedalus "an impossible person." Since Joyce was committed to an all but impossible task, he must have gloried in the self-impeachment. "The intellect of man is forced to choose," insofar as Yeats defined that choice, "Perfection of the life, or of the work." Joyce was one of the few who opted for, and came very near to achieving, the latter alternative. This testament of human imperfections

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glows in the brighter light of his achievement.

Harry Levin

Harry Levin is Irving Babbitt Professor of comparative literature at Harvard. His *Shakespeare and the Revolution of the Times* (Oxford) will be published this spring.

Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot ed. by Frank Kermode

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in collaboration with Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $10.95, $4.95 paper)

"From time to time, every hundred years or so, it is desirable that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature, and set the poet and the poems in a new order," T.S. Eliot once noted; and while he would not have explicitly said so, the direction of his whole critical enterprise implied that in our time he believed the task had fallen to him. Not only in his more famous evaluations, such as the essay on the Metaphysical poets or his strenuous advocacy of neglected Jacobean dramatists, but in everything he wrote Eliot's intention was to provide a reading of English literature that would be to the 20th century what the criticism of Coleridge and Johnson had been to theirs. In this capacity he was always ranking poets: devaluing Arnold, the Romantics, and Milton; elevating Donne; deciding that in respect to the portrayal of manners Congreve was greater than Shakespeare; and, as Edmund Wilson has pointed out, Eliot's decrees have generally been obeyed with great solemnity by academics, for whom the pronouncements of this "neo-Johnsonian dictator" have come to possess a certain grim authority.

Eliot was himself sensitive about these developments. In a preface to the 1964 edition of *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, he lamented the excessive popularity of those notable phrases, "objective correlative" and "dissociation of sensibility," and in his essay "To Criticize the Critic" complained: "I find myself constantly irritated by having my words, perhaps written thirty or forty years ago, quoted as if I had uttered them yesterday." And it is true that he constantly qualified himself in his criticism; aware of the dramatic effect his literary opinions seemed to have on the world, he felt obliged to repudiate them whenever he thought they had become too influential. But he also, and increasingly as he grew older, claimed a wide province for criticism, so that the tendency to regard him as an oracle of modern letters was in a sense encouraged by his willingness to discourse on virtually any subject.

Early on in his career he became convinced of the need for literary critics to address themselves to worldly issues. As he said in an essay of 1928 on Dryden, "You can never draw the line between esthetic criticism and moral and social criticism." From then on, Eliot devoted himself to promulgating the views characterized in a notorious rubric as "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion." That these were more than casual attitudes can be seen from the zeal with which he expounded them, the full extent of which is documented in Roger Kojecky's admirable book, *T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism*. Eliot's aim, first proposed in the pages of *Criterion*, the journal he edited from 1922 to 1939, and later on in the *Christian News-Letter* and the *New English Weekly*, was no less than the formation of a community of Christians who would become a leading force in establishing the rule of the Anglican Church over the nation. Meanwhile in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, *The Idea of a Christian Society* and in his lectures on "The Aims of Education," he continued to advance his often chillingly reactionary views on the necessity of preserving a class elite in England. It is to the credit of Frank Kermode's new anthology that he has kept his selections from these books to a minimum, and concentrated instead on Eliot's literary criticism.

Professor Kermode is an ideal editor for Eliot, especially since his own most recent work, *The Classic: Literary Images of Permanence and Change*, is based on Eliot's essay on the same theme, "What is a Classic?" In *The Classic* and in his introduction to the *Selected Prose*, Kermode evinces a good deal more reverence toward Eliot than he did in *Romantic Image* (1957), where he expressed unequivocal dissatisfaction with some of Eliot's critical formulations, in particular that of the "dissociation of

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sensibility." For Kermode, Eliot's greatness is not to be found in such historical generalities, but in "his own creative reading of past poetry." To illustrate the nature of this reading, Kermode cites a letter from Eliot to Stephen Spender in which he attempted to describe the experience of "surrender" to an author's work; a "bewildering moment" occurs, followed by "recovery," which in turn prepares for the critic's "having something to say, before you have wholly forgotten both surrender and recovery." This act is, in Kermode's view, the "originating movement" of Eliot's most significant essays, and of his poetry as well; so significant, in fact, that

> *what began as a private motion of his sensibility has become part of the common stock of educated feeling; the lines from* The Revenger's Tragedy, *fragments of Dante, the objects of a unique creative impulse, are now of the material of our minds, and from that we may judge the depth and quality of the initial surrender.*

There is no question that Eliot's influence on the way we think about literature has been so profound as to prove his own celebrated argument, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," that "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it." Kermode elicits our debt to Eliot with his usual elegance and ingenuity, but I suspect that we may have invested too much in this "common stock of educated feeling"; made our "surrender" too unconditional; after all, Eliot himself stressed that his critical terms were provisional (any reader of F.R. Leavis' devastating polemic, "T.S. Eliot as Critic," will find there far less gracious ways of putting it), and valued "appreciations of individual authors" over "essays of generalization."

Generality seemed to provoke in him a style that was too often ponderous, awkward and dispiritingly tentative, while his "appreciations" are invariably brilliant and shrewd. The literary portraits in *The Sacred Wood*, for example, which Eliot deprecated on several occasions, are not at all dated; first published in 1920, that book remains a masterpiece of systematic literary discrimination, all the more surprising in that it appeared in a time when what was then called "impressionistic" criticism presided. Together with the appraisals of Johnson, Yeats and Goethe in the volume *On Poetry and Poets*, the brilliant essay on Pound collected posthumously in *To Criticize the Critic*, and the whole of *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, Eliot's earlier essays reveal a more intuitive imagination than he allowed himself to display later on, after the New Criticism had become virtually canonical. Kermode includes most, although by no means all of these essays, and a few others of interest that haven't until now appeared in any other collection, among them brief introductions to Baudelaire's *Intimate Journals* and Pascal's *Pensées*; in general, however, his selections are rather orthodox. It should also be noted that he has made the decision to excerpt from a number of Eliot's longer essays, an editorial practice which seems to me inexcusable; in every instance, it disrupts their continuity.

Matthew Arnold once observed that "life and the world being in modern times very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort." This was surely what motivated Eliot's criticism; and no doubt it will survive in this form, as the shaping force from which his poetry was made.

James Atlas

James Atlas is currently writing a biography of Delmore Schwartz.

I Am A Memory Come Alive by Franz Kafka ed. by Nahum N. Glatzer

(Schocken; $10)

"Conversation," observed Kafka with terrifying dispassion, "takes the importance, the seriousness, the truth out of everything I think." And yet his life stood condemned to conversation—incessant, protracted, endless—with himself and others alike. Mind spinning crazily like a broken armature, he conversed with himself in silent dialogue, an inner conversation in which mind debated and cajoled its own shrunken imaginative power, remarked dejectedly on its ever-widening isolation, brooded obsessively on its feared loss of identity through submersion in marriage, heaped scorn on its unsupportive partner, a skinny, sickly body and accepted finally, at first with unnatural eagerness, then with weary, sad acquiescence, its own impending, tubercular death. Feverishly, too, he pursued conversation with the outer world, but conversation largely epistolary, and thus but an echo of real conversation—evasive, at least in part by conscious design, of true conversation's explosive jostle and clash. On paper he conversed with devoted friends about his own lengthily confessed inadequacies as son and lover; with fiancées about the tumultuous course of his courtships, thrice-aborted, each engagement being broken suddenly and painfully at the penultimate moment; with lovers about his fear of the flesh, entreating each love in turn to accept the dark truth that for him "coitus" would remain always a "punishment for the happiness of being together," unburdening to each his secret belief that if ever he were "to endure marriage," it must be by living "as ascetically as possible, more ascetically than [even] a bachelor."

I Am A Memory Come Alive, selected autobiographical writings of Kafka drawn from his copious output of letters, as well as from his diaries, stories and aphorisms, both traces and celebrates the existence of these simultaneous, often intermingling dialogues, and in the process throws into relief the major contours of Kafka's life. And the sharp point at which these contours meet, overlap and merge focuses the overwhelming dilemma from which Kafka could never escape: cut off from human contact, always shrinking from the proffered intimate caress, from childhood onward he turned to writing, only to watch helplessly and with growing horror as the ceaseless drone of human chatter devalued speech from one side, while his own cankering, paralyzing fear of literary impotence slowly eroded language from the other, and along with language, Kafka's own intensely private imaginative vision, his dream of literature, his secret, unadmitted aspiration to greatness.

The facts of Kafka's life are few. Born in Prague in 1883, the son of a businessman, he dwelt there for nearly 40 years, save for occasional trips, sojourns at sanatoria, and the final, intensely happy, almost idyllic 11 months of his life before his death of consumption in 1924, spent with his 19-year old mistress, Dora Dymant, a Chasidic Jewess, amid the hardships of postwar, inflation-ridden Berlin. Trained in the law, which Kafka early viewed as a wasting diet of "sawdust . . . already

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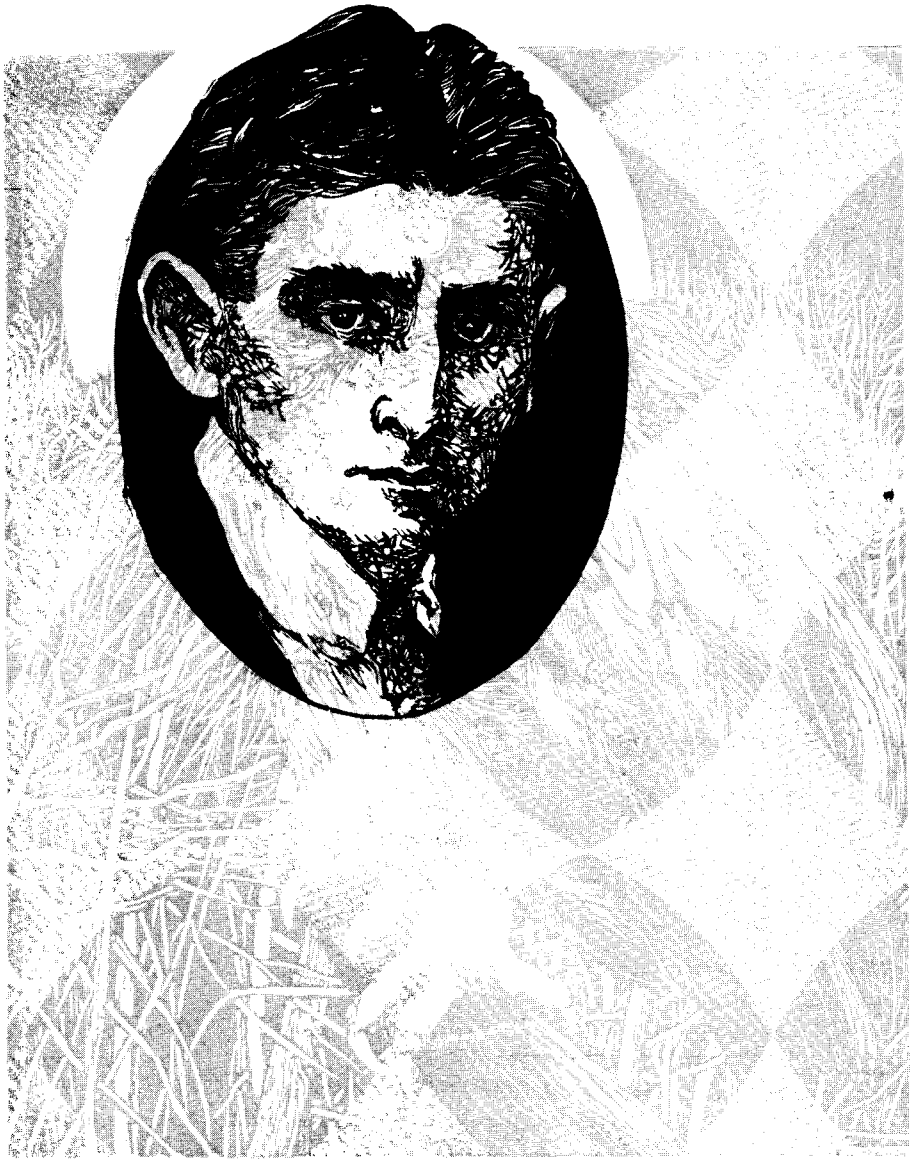
chewed for me in . . . other people's mouths," he labored unhappily year after year in the legal department of the Worker's Accident Insurance Office in Prague. His days were captive to a single, monotonous, unchanging routine: "in the morning, the office, in the afternoon, the [asbestos] factory," a family-owned venture which Kafka bitterly resented yet submissively served, and "now in the evening," his only opportunity to write, surrounded by "shouting to the right and left of me at home," a chaos which would seemingly preclude his making "use of a single moment."

He wrote nonetheless, diaries and letters especially, the latter with prolific, urgent abandon. And, strangely enough, the neat diary entries and tract-like epistles, the tremulous, imprisoned voice of the private diarist and the ill-concealed desolation of the public letter-writer are often indistinguishable, inseparably alike in style and content precisely because they serve a single purpose. Taken together, the diaries and letters constitute a joint, sombre, often analytic pursuit of identity. They ask in unison a single question: who is speaking, and to whom? Who is the writer, and who his elusive recipient? Together, certainly, the diaries and letters comprise a duologue of sorts, a colloquy between phantoms, between an irrepressible image of his beloved that rises from Kafka's imagination to be deposited everywhere in his letters, a fictive yet poignant image confirmed by romance after disastrous romance to have been of little material substance, and a Franz Kafka himself possessed of no firm identity.

An "empty face which wore its emptiness openly"—this is how Kafka's diary describes, after their first meeting, Felice Bauer, the hopelessly middle-class, faintly vulgar girl who twice was his fiancée. An "empty face"—a face he could wreathe with a delicate nimbus of words and upon whose blank features he could inscribe the figures of his imagination. And when Felice once fails to respond to his torrent of letters, he contrives a metaphysical excuse. "Neither in the office nor in the tram could you write to me," he explains patiently. "Shall I tell you why, dearest? You didn't know whom to write to, I am no target for letters." The explanation for all this, of course, is that inwardly and outwardly, with himself and with others alike, all of Kafka's relationships are mediated by language, by speech and conversation. "Hold fast to the diary from today



Kafka

by Jack Coughlin

on! Write regularly! Don't surrender," he counsels himself, almost in unconscious defiance of life. Only within the circumscribed fastness of the diary could he safely carry on a "dialogue with myself," a dialogue whose aim was to put to rest, once and for all, "this tempestuous or floundering or morass-like inner self." The pages of the diary alone would supply "at every instant . . . a new confirmation of my existence" by conferring on its shapeless, uncongealed moments an autobiographical "outline of my life" which could "hold myself together" with the same "distance" and "tranquility" he found in the diaries of men long since dead—say, the diaries of Goethe.

How else are we to explain his epistolary courtships, his long-distance wooing by parcel and missive and telegram, the more than 500 pages of extant, published letters to Felice alone? Once, at his desk, surveying the rapidly mounting pile of letters from Felice, Kafka himself seizes on the paradox of their relation: "And what . . . made you write that I have won you completely? Dearest, that's what you believe for a brief moment, at a distance. To win you at close quarters . . . requires greater strength than the play of muscles that drives my pen." All too clearly he recognizes that "this communication by letter" feeds the hunger it was intended to quell, provoking on his part "an almost constant longing for reality." Eight years later, in 1921, when another intense friendship began to disintegrate, this one with Milena Jesenká-Pollak, a smouldering, overgalvanized, impetuous, unhappily-married writer of 24, a woman of appetence and emotion who had translated several of his stories from German into Czech, Kafka's lament is unchanged. True, the letters to Milena strike a hitherto absent note of strong physical longing, a moving current of playful, erotic tenderness—"I see you bent over your work, your neck is bare, I stand behind . . . I didn't mean to kiss, it's only helpless love"—intermixed with

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reflex self-disgust and cringing self-abasement: "I don't think I'll dare to offer you my hand, girl, this dirty, twitching, clawlike, unsteady, uncertain, hot-cold hand." But both voices are caught up and swept away by a pessimistic awareness of the medium damning itself: "what is decisive is my powerlessness, increased by the letters, to reach beyond the letters, pwerless toward you as well as toward myself." The message is the same in almost every letter. Kafka cannot help but sin against life by trying to recover his personality through an act of writing—however much he rails against letters—instead of in a communion of love.

"His books are amazing. He himself is far more amazing," wrote Milena in a sad, pre-posthumous obituary. No acquaintance with Kafka, though brief, can subdue a like impression. However inexplicably or malevolently, Kafka's life appears to shape itself, time after time, into a series of excruciating, irreconcilable alternatives, mirror-image cul-de-sacs from which flight was unthinkable. Kafka's hapless apprenticeship as an anguished connoisseur of the double-bind, that steel-jawed psychological trap from which death alone affords escape was, it would appear, complete. Why else the looming antinomies that hedge his life at every turn? Why else, like Proust, does he strive to distance the world, to shut it out, to draw the curtain and bar the door, only to surrender, at the very moment of victory, to an insatiable craving and lust for the very life so militantly banished, for its normalcy, its complacency, its voluptuous consolations? Why else the hint of satisfaction at the strife within his breast between "two selves," one, fleeing marriage with its promise of a "permanent home" and "bourgeoisie orderliness," the other gazing wistfully back at this artistic nemesis? Why else his cultivation of such a thoroughgoing ambivalence toward writing itself, welcoming it alternately as "self-preservation"—"a form of prayer"—and as a "diabolical . . . process," "grim death," "a reward for devil worship"?

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Why else does Kafka strive with relish to disembody himself, to disincarnate himself, to detach himself from life, to destroy himself, to become a watcher, to transform himself into an instrument for transcribing the terrible anxiety, guilt and objectless fright he discovered in his soul?

Why else? Because his real life, whatever its apparent overlay of ambivalence or unclear zig-zag movement, strove unerringly, if often invisibly, toward an ever more perfect union with this core of guilt, a rapturous embrace of anxiety and fear. Whether consciously or not, the double-binds were contrived, sought-after, fashioned with determination and purpose. "What is stopping me" from living, confesses Kafka to an uncomprehending Felice, is "a desire and a command to torment myself for some higher purpose," an agony in which "guilt" is embraced and fostered as "the most perfect form of repentance." Repentance for what? For sin—for separation from "a reassuringly distant, if possibly infinite God." Kafka believed his consumption to be punishment, "nothing but an overflowing" into his frail body of his "mental disease"; his "insomnia" too was "only an all too vivid sense of sin"; his very life, weighed in the balance of worth and found wanting, was nothing more than an unredeemable, irreversible "fall into sin." In their identical concern with sin, his life and art veer perilously close. Even to Dora Dymant, the young companion of his final months, this point is clear. "To my mind," she would write in 1949, 25 years after his death, the underlying theme of *The Trial*, perhaps Kafka's foremost novel, is its hero's refusal "to submit to lifelong crucifixion. For there is no life save in the 'crucifixion,' and before the supreme court nobody is acquitted." Forsaken by God, bereft of hope, what is left, mused Kafka, but "to roam about like a lost dog, mutely gazing around with imploring eyes"? Is it a mere fancy to think here of the last photograph ever taken of Kafka, a grainy, haunting image with his arched eyebrows and hollowed cheeks surrounding suddenly widened eyes? Those eyes have the look of someone who has learned a terrible truth about himself. And, looking off into the silence beyond, has been reconciled to it.

Alan Weinblatt

Alan Weinblatt teaches English at Boston College and is completing a study of T. S. Eliot.

Charles Olson and Ezra Pound An Encounter at St. Elizabeth's by Charles Olson ed. by Catherine Seelye

(Grossman/Viking; $11.95)

When German resistance in northern Italy ended in May, 1945, Ezra Pound, in Rapallo, turned himself over to American counterintelligence people and was put in a "Gorilla Cage" near Pisa. After a few weeks there he was flown back to the United States and put in a jail in the District of Columbia to await trial for treason. On November 27, 1945, Charles Olson attended EP's court arraignment and saw for the first time this poet who had been for him, as for many other American writers such a mix of talent, wisdom and perversity as to bring into focus in the one striking redhead most of the problems of modern literature. A few weeks later Olson actually met EP, by visiting him in St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Then for two years Olson visited EP irregularly for 20 or 30 minute periods, and kept a sort of journal of what the 35-year-old disciple and the 60-year-old master said to each other. The journal is the core of Catherine Seelye's new volume.

Olson was living and working in Washington at the time, having served in several government jobs during the war. But of bureaucracy he was tiring; he was making a start at a new life, with literature. By early 1946 he had written, aside from poems, a remarkable book about Melville, *Call Me Ishmael*, that he was trying to find a publisher for, and he had followed EP's troubles with intensity in the papers. He had even struggled through drafts of an assessment of EP, and had composed two poems about the man and an exotic document called "This is Yeats Speaking" in which he had Yeats explain to EP, from beyond the grave, what he had meant in the late '20s when he advised EP, "Do not be elected to the Senate of your country" (presumably neither Yeats nor Olson had heard of Sen. Bankhead's remark to EP when EP came to Washington in 1939, that Washington had no openings for people like EP). These pieces are also in the Seelye volume and show Olson mixing rage and admiration for EP amost equally.

They show too, as does the journal, a remarkably lucid Olson. Those who have had trouble with the density of

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Olson will find the Seelye volume a fine switch, a new way of entry into Olson himself. But the center of the book remains EP.

Olson could not take the fashionable position about EP at the time, could not separate EP's politics from his poetry. Olson was sure that EP himself knew that the poetry and politics had to go together, and he was determined to judge the poetry for its fascism even though he believed EP was "as gifted and trained and skillful a poet as any man who has written the English language in these years of our century." But while Olson wanted to make political judgements on the man, he found that when he was with him he couldn't *talk* politics. He could only sit there and suffer when EP praised Westbrook Pegler, damned the Jews and laid plans for meeting with high Soviet officials in Tiflis and saving civilization. Luckily for Olson EP would mix his grandioseness and malice with sensible humility and occasional sparks of his old wit, leaving Olson with feelings about him that fluctuated wildly. It was obvious that EP needed him—for few of EP's old friends in this early period of his imprisonment had begun to visit him—and it was obvious also that EP admired Olson, saw that he was a talent of the order that EP liked to encourage and sponsor. So when EP was not being grandiose Olson could be comforted with praise of his Melville book, and with advice on how to merchandise it.

But though they were friendly Olson kept discovering that EP thought of him finally as the enemy, since EP was still sore about America winning the war. He talked about the Germans and Italians as 'we,' the Americans as 'they.' He seemed to blame the Axis loss on the discovery of radar, and was disposed to regard that discovery as a freakish event, a piece of undeserved American luck that undid all of EP's well-laid plans. He was also sore at the British and the BBC, and at *The New York Times* and all American publishers except James Laughlin (Laughlin came in for lumps too). Olson could sympathize with some of EP's malice, and was working up to deep darknesses of his own, but as he sat there in the hospital-prison (with a guard always in attendance) hearing of the wonders of Oswald Mosley and the like he could not help feeling indignant in a normal American-liberal way. At the end of only their second meeting he was not sure that he wanted to come back, and though he did keep coming back he found moments at every meeting when EP insisted upon "corroding" Olson's "will to help him." Olson's report of the last meeting ended with "bah."

After parting at St. Elizabeth's they met only once again in 1965 in Spoleto when "the fierceness of Pound had settled down into a voiceless thing." But Olson couldn't stop thinking and writing about him. His final assessment (in the Seelye volume) was a piece of wisdom about EP that no one who has dealt with the EP phenomenon can ignore, called "Grampa Goodbye." In it he described EP as, among other things, "terribly American, insecure," one who did not seem "to have inhabited his own experience," and one also in whom there was "a lack of the amorous, down there somewhere." On the credit side EP had "the best damned ear" and though it might not have even been his own it was the "extraordinary ear of an era," an ear that heard "the beauty of loss." Yes.

Catherine Seelye has done an excellent job of editing. The Olson papers, which are housed at the University of Connecticut, must be a glorious mess indeed but this volume nonetheless manages to show orderliness and precision in Olson's thought. And what is chiefly remarkable is that the order is present even as Olson tried to put together the pieces of one of literature's greatest disorders, EP himself. For this reviewer's tastes Olson's prose went downhill after the selections in this volume.

Reed Whittemore

Reed Whittemore's most recent book is *William Carlos Williams: Poet from Jersey* (Houghton-Mifflin).

Thornton Wilder: An Intimate Portrait by Richard H. Goldstone

(Saturday Review Press; $11.95)

When Thornton Wilder died recently, one obituary came up with a quote that probably goes a long way toward solving the conundrum he posed for many critics. "I am not interested in the ephemeral," said Wilder, in "such subjects as the adulteries of dentists. I am interested in those things that repeat and repeat in the lives of the millions." Whatever may be the ultimate fate of his reputation as a writer, there is something both honest and appealing in that, and the concluding sentence would probably be an apt epitaph for a man who obviously appealed more to the literate general public than to the literary cognoscenti. Wilder saw what he wanted to do and, within his limitations, he did it, though often experiencing critical slings and arrows in the process.

Writing in the October 22, 1930 issue of *The New Republic*, *Michael Gold* launched what apparently became one of the major literary brouhahas of the time. Thornton Wilder was the subject, the publication of his novel *The Woman of Andros* the occasion. Gold's attack was both literary and personal and, according to Wilder's longtime friend Richard Goldstone, who is professor of English at the College of the City of New York, it seems to have wounded the novelist deeply. Who, after all, even in those days, liked to be termed a "poet of a small sophisticated class . . . our gentle bourgeoisie." Even more, who would take kindly to the assertion that, were he to write a book "about modern America," it would, Gold predicted, "reveal all his fundamental silliness and superficiality." Wilder eventually was to take up the challenge with his play *Our Town;* he wasn't completely to resolve the debate.

He did, however, become what Goldstone terms "an institution" and this somewhat bland and academic detailing of the *how* of it reveals some of the deliberate mechanics behind the mystique. It also deflates some literary balloons but that, I suspect, is largely unintentional.

When Wilder's second novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, appeared in 1927, it turned a hitherto obscure schoolteacher into an almost instant national celebrity. We were in the jazz age; Babe Ruth had just hit 60 home runs and Gene Tunney successfully defended the heavyweight title. Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford were the ruling monarchs of the screen, and Coolidge did not "choose to run." Lindberg flew the Atlantic.

What we didn't have, however, was a real culture-hero. Wilder, the son of a never quite approving Calvinist father, a Yale and Princeton man, teacher at Lawrenceville and later, under his friend Robert Hutchins, at the University of Chicago, emerged to fill the gap. And to cultivate the role, partly through his often fleeting celebrity friendships—with Gene Tunney, Alexander

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Woollcott, the Scott Fitzgeralds, Glenway Wescott, the Lunts, the Ben Hechts, Ethel Barrymore and others. Intrigued with the theater, attracted by its glitter if not necessarily its gold, he moved about on the fringes of its rarefied atmosphere, present but not really a part. Everything else aside, he had an impulse since adolescence "to mount a platform and *perform*," Goldstone writes. With *Our Town*, things obviously were to change.

But style and elegance and a sense of irony were hardly enough in the depression years, which found Wilder being regarded as a "literary holdover from the 1920s," teaching at Chicago where he was "irritable and brooked no challenges from his acolytes." He courts the elite, the social and literary luminaries, by whom he is easily dazzled. In the mid-'30s the novel *Heaven's My Destination* is largely ignored by the major journals.

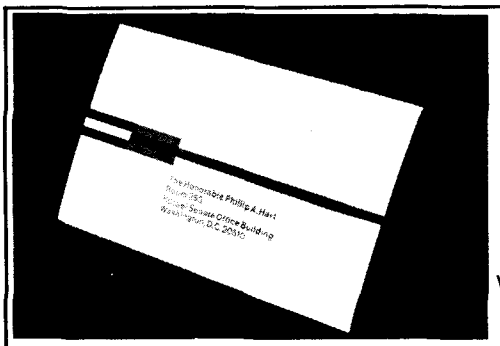
One reviewer of that book noted Wilder's "own ambiguous attitude toward his chief character. One gathers that Wilder likes George Brush and would like to approve of him. . . . Mr. Wilder's intelligence and his emotions very probably conflicted all through the writing. . . ." Reading Goldstone's "intimate portrait," it was difficult to avoid the feeling that he was experiencing a somewhat comparable difficulty. As he appears here, Wilder is not an easy man to like, though one has to respect him for doing far more than his share for a family in which relations had, to say the least, their problems.

Dealing with him as a novelist and playwright presents even more problems. Wilder's two leading works, *The Bridge* and *Our Town*, are regarded by many as "classics" (whatever that may mean today). *The Matchmaker* provided the basis for one of the most successful musicals in theater history, *Hello, Dolly!* which, with the originally much overrated *The Skin of Our Teeth*, has had a Broadway revival just this season. *The Eighth Day* was published when he was almost 70; *Theophilus North* only in 1973, when he was 76, and received generally uncritical reviews.

Yet, Wilder, despite the volume of writing he produced, was not a truly "major" writer, much as one might now like to accord him the posthumous distinction. Goldstone acknowledges that "there are some who believe that Wilder's artistic deficiencies stem from a weakness of nerve and that failure of his life comes from too little commitment." He disagrees, and so, in a sense, do I. It was far more likely too little talent rather than too little commitment that limited Wilder. And, perhaps, too much overpraise and too much celebrity at the beginning. That, as we've seen all too frequently, is the primary American literary affliction, the one that too often confirms the contention of Wilder's contemporary, Fitzgerald, about there being no "second acts" in American life.

Catharine Hughes

Catharine Hughes is drama critic for *America*. Her *American Playwrights: 1945-75* will be published this spring (Pitman/London).



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Evelyn Waugh: A Biography by Christopher Sykes

(Little, Brown; $12.50)

Most writers destined to survive sink into a temporary oblivion soon after their deaths; years later, if revaluations are ultimately favorable, their books reappear in the stores. Evelyn Waugh died as recently as 1966, but he was granted a peculiar resurrection only seven years later when the *Observer* (London) served up some pungent morsels from his diaries; Englishmen were rather sharply compelled to think of Waugh as he manifested himself once more in all his adroit wittiness and famous nastiness. But most readers don't begrudge the dead; the diary entries had been jotted down sufficiently long ago and far away; they added some piquancy to earlier decades and, after all, the man did write cleverly. Just how much of his drollery will prove to be permanent, the future will of course decide. Meanwhile Waugh is holding on rather energetically, and now this biography of him by his long-time crony, Christopher Sykes, will help toward a reassessment, if only by stimulating some arguments, for Sykes has some distinct literary opinions which he serves among the chunks of biography.

His book is not easy to read because it is so clumsily written, a serious enough defect in a veteran writer; and the text doesn't seem to have been very carefully

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copy-edited. The reader is jolted almost from the first—"He became overcome by self-pity"—and the bad writing persists through the book: "By cutting the novel up into a series of episodes, or short stories, little of its strength was visible" (it is rather unusual to have a little strength cut up a novel) and, "Being a fashionable entertainment several detectives were present" (and perhaps we do have detectives who are a fashionable entertainment). Aside from these kinds of blunders, which are multiple, the text is saturated with coy phraseology reinforced by clichés: the young Cecil Beaton first appears as "a comely child"; Waugh had known "marital bliss" until his first wife and one of his friends "had become lovers in the carnal sense," and much else along these lines make the book sound at times like a Victorian melodrama.

But it is not altogether that, as the reader will discover if he can make his way through all the sloppy writing, for the book reflects some of the farcical elements of the epoch it covers, and although Christopher Sykes admits that it is too early for a definitive biography of Waugh, the present volume is fairly thorough. Sykes has researched widely, and he makes copious use of interviews and documents as well as of his own recollections. Most biographers who know their subjects personally are under a proximity handicap; like most of Waugh's friends, Sykes quarrelled with him, and he gives an idea as to the extent of Waugh's fretfulness when he notes that Lady Diana Cooper "had a private term 'Gremlin' (old RAF slang) for Evelyn which she used to me and a few other fellow-sufferers." This book deals with various other friends of Waugh who felt they were his victims, and Sykes notes that Waugh's rudeness increased with age. Yet Sykes views him with a valid detachment and doesn't flinch from recording examples of his antic behavior.

Whether or not an author is worth reading, and I think that Waugh is, a writer's biography can be valuable, not only as a depiction of someone living at a certain time, but also as a partial illumination of that time. As for Waugh's work, it certainly made him well known during his life. In 1928 his first novel, *Decline and Fall*, immediately drew critical and, later, general attention to the young writer. Other successes followed; he had learned from Ronald Firbank and probably from Aldous Huxley, eventually surpassing them both—Huxley seems quite thin today, though the savage attack on his writing by Sykes in the present book is too extreme.

Waugh's earlier, between-wars phase also included the glossily witty *Vile Bodies* and *A Handful of Dust* that were followed in 1945 by the all-too-facile best seller, *Brideshead Revisited*, which Rose Macaulay called a "Catholic tract," though how she could have hissed that phrase, as we are told here that she did, is difficult to imagine. Sykes, "as a Roman Catholic since birth," thinks the religious theme neatly handled but admits that non-Catholics are "left out in the cold." Artistically he finds various (and obvious) failures in the story. The postwar books, in which Waugh recovered his former brilliance, don't win Christopher Sykes' complete enthusiasm.

He finds weaknesses in the *Sword of Honour* trilogy, particularly in the protagonist of this serio-comic story, Guy Crouchback, who is "ineffectual"; but "heroes" of this kind are a constant in Waugh's fiction, and that's a large part of the fun. Sykes nevertheless finds, in *Sword of Honour*, "merits far outweighing the blemishes." He is somewhat more critical on the score of another novel of Waugh's last period, *The Loved One*, which is usually regarded (by others and myself) as a great satire, with its hilarious dramatization of the American funeral industry and its cosmetically decorated corpses. Edmund Wilson, usually an admirer of Waugh, criticized *The Loved One* harshly, and Sykes quotes a long passage from his attack on the book, though he doesn't cite Wilson on another novel of the late phase, that harrowing confessional, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, which Sykes doesn't care much for; but Wilson in 1962 spoke of it in terms of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Waugh during his lifetime irritated not only his close friends, but also a multitude of his readers—particularly by his pugnacious Catholicism, his contempt for non-conservative thinking, and his country-house chauvinism. But a good many of us overlooked these elements and enjoyed the books for their satire, their mischievousness, and their farcical side, all of which may help carry his work into the future.

Besides noting Waugh's cantankerous personality, Sykes provides a great many other aspects of the novelist's life, including the rather unhappy childhood; the references to the youthful homosexual experiences are, understandably, somewhat blurred. During the course of the book, quite a few of Waugh's friends

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come on as supplementary characters, including Graham Greene and Monsignor Ronald Kno, as well as a number of women, not only Nancy Mitford and other associates but of course the two wives, by the latter of whom he had several children. Various subsidiary figures, such as Benito Mussolini and Sir John Betjeman, make cameo appearances. Waugh was a friend of Randolph Churchill but disliked his father, who nevertheless admired Waugh's books. One man whom Waugh devised all kinds of strategies to meet successfully played the artful dodger: T.S. Eliot.

This biography depends heavily on anecdotes, which help to give it a lively tone; there is for example the case of the aging Evelyn Waugh who had an ear-trumpet which he fiercely thrust into lunch-table conversations, a practice he gave up after his good friend Mrs. Ian Fleming banged the instrument with a spoon. But besides mere anecdotes this volume contains sketches of people and bits of history. The reader can find that the book is most informative as well as amusing in its full-length portrait of a comedian with tensions.

Harry T. Moore

Harry T. Moore is author of *Henry James and His World* (Viking).

Reconsideration

Memoirs of Hecate County by Edmund Wilson

Edmund Wilson's *Memoirs of Hecate County* came out in 1946; I read a copy borrowed from the Reading (Pa.) public library, where it sat placidly on the open shelves while the book was being banned in New York State. Mere reading must have seemed a mild sin in the Reading of those years; it was a notoriously permissive town, famous for its rackets, its whores and its aquitting juries. The head librarian was a Miss Ruth who had been in Wallace Stevens' class at Reading High; she had kindly allowed me access to the adult part of the library (the children's section was in the basement) since I was tall enough to present my borrower's card at the counter. In 1946 I was 14. What that slightly sinister volume, a milky green in the original Doubleday edition, with the epigraph from Gogol in Russian and a sepia photograph of a three-faced Hecate opposite the title page, meant to me, I can reconstruct imperfectly. Certainly I skipped the pages of French that the curious Mr. Blackburn spouts toward the end, and probably I skimmed the inside-the-book-business ax-grinding of "The Milhollands and their Damned Soul." But the long, central story, "The Princess with the Golden Hair," the heart and scandal of this collection of six "memoirs," I read as they say, avidly, my first and to this day most vivid glimpse of sex through the window of fiction.

All of my life I have remembered how Anna, "as a gesture of affection and respect," held the hero's penis in her hand as they drifted off to sleep; and how Imogen in coitus halted her lover and "did something special and gentle" that caused her to have her climax first; and how one of the women (I had forgotten which) gazes at the narrator, and through him at the amazed young reader, over the curve of her naked hip. This last image, redolent of the casual intimacy and exposure, that adults presumably enjoyed, affected me so powerfully I was surprised, rereading, to discover how brief it is:

> *. . . once, when I came back into the room, I found her curled up on the bed and was pleased by her eyes, very cunning and round—at once agate like marbles and soft like burrs—looking at me over her hips.*

It is Anna, of course, and the emphasis—typical of Wilson's erotic art—is all on her eyes. The mechanically and psychologically complicated business of Imogen's backbrace touched me less memorably, but like the images above it smelled of the real, it showed sex as a human transaction that took place on worn furniture, in moods of doubt and hangover, in a muddle of disillusion and balked comfort: the hero does not omit to let us know that he found Anna's fond trick of penis-holding "in the long run . . . uncomfortable." There was something dogged and humorless and pungent about Wilson's rendition of love: the adjective "meaty" recurs, spoiling pleasant contexts, and the simile everyone remembers from "I Thought of Daisy" tells of the heroine's held feet, "in pale stockings . . . like two little moist cream cheeses encased in covers of cloth." Pungent, and savage; I was blinded by the journal entry, in "Princess," that begins, "——ing in the afternoon, with the shades down and all her clothes on—different from anything else—rank satisfactory smell like the salt marine tides we come out of . . ." And a very naked moment comes in the last story, at the Blackburns' party, when the hero throws Jo, the third of his willing fornicatrices, onto the bed full of guests' wraps: "She put one arm up over her eyes; her legs dangled, like a child's, from her knees . . . 'Move forward,' I said, and put her legs up. Her white thighs and her lower buttocks were brutally laid bare; her feet, in silver openwork sandals, were pointing in opposite directions."

Of course I could have got this sort of thing, in 1946, from Erskine Caldwell or John O'Hara, indeed *did* get it from the Southern California detective fiction of James Cain and Raymond Chandler; but the sex in these writers was not fortifed by Wilson's conscious intention of bringing European sexual realism into American fiction at last. The publication of Wilson's notebooks of the '20s, from which the Anna sections of *Hecate County* are taken almost verbatim, show his sexual scorecards mingled as if naively with landscape descriptions and intellectual ruminations and the anecdotes of his rather silly upper-class friends. The lonely bookish child is staring with a frown from the shadows of the Red Bank mansion, where the mother was deaf and the father nervously fragile; the America he perceives seems grim and claustrophobic, though hectic. There is a true whiff of Hell in Hecate County, less in the specific touches of supernatural diabolism with which this utter rationalist rather quaintly adorned his tales, but in the low ceilings and cheap underwear of the sex idyll, the clothes and neuroses of the copulators. America has always tolerated sex as a joke, as a night's prank in the burlesque theater or fairground tent; but not as a solemn item in the work of life. It was Wilson's deadly ernest, his unwinking naturalistic refusal to release us into farce, that made *Hecate County* in all its dignity and high intent the target of a (successful!) prosecution for obscenity.

Rereading, now, in this liberated age, and in the light of the notebooks, one expects to find the sex tame. And so, in a sense, it is. "——ing" turns out to be, in the unexpurgated journals, merely "Fucking," rather than the more exotic activity I tried to imagine, and the tender journal accounts of cunnilingus and fellatio and Anna's "monthlies" did not find their way into even the revised edition of 1959. In the fiction, Wilson

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sets down no sexual detail in simple celebration, to please and excite himself, but always to illuminate the social or psychological condition of the two women. The Anna of "Princess," compared to the confusing love-object of the journals, is admirably coherent, as the product of certain cultural and economic conditions in Brooklyn; how telling, for instance, is her reluctance to be seen naked, as if nudity—to the upper classes an esthetic proclamation, a refutation of shame—evokes inhibitions having nothing to do with sexual acts, which she performs freely. And how plausibly, if ploddingly, are the clothes of the two women described and made to symbolize their social presences. Such details—seized, we sometimes feel, by a sensibility that doubts its own grasp on the "real"—lend the factual sexual descriptions a weight, a heat, far from tame. It is Imogen (whose original may be waiting exposure in the unpublished journals of the '30s; married for 16 years, she seems too old for the narrator at the age he assigns himself, "on the verge of thirty") who occasions Wilson's subtlest, harshest instances of sexual realism. After two years of yearning, the hero greets their tryst in a mood of nervous lassitude. The very perfection of her body distances her—"I found that I was expressing admiration of her points as if she were some kind of museum piece"—and her eager lubricity, "making things easy for the entrant with a honeysweet sleek profusion," dulls his triumph: "She became, in fact, so smooth and open that after a moment I could hardly feel her . . . I went on and had a certain disappointment, for, with the brimming of female fluid, I felt even less sensation; but—gently enough—I came, too." Gently enough, the failure of an overprepared, ideal love to connect is masterfully anatomized, and movingly contrasted with his tawdry, harried affair with Anna, that involves him with the underworld and gives him gonorrhea. One's breath is snatched to see, in the journals, the patrician, pontifical Wilson led by sex to the edge of the abyss of poverty, its diseases, its tangled familial furies, its hopeless anonymity. He did not fall in. The last story of *Hecate County*, surreal and troubled, prefigures his marriage to Margaret Canby in 1930, closing out the decade.

The journals make clear more abundantly than the novella how much Wilson loved Anna, how fully she satisfied him and gave him his deferred manhood. "The Princess with the Golden Hair" is a love-poem to her and one of the best of his writing generation's obligatory love-poems to the lower classes. "Yet for them the depression was always going on like a flood that swept away their houses . . . and the attitudes, I knew, that I assumed to myself and in my conversation with others meant nothing in that bare room in Brooklyn where Anna and her garment-worker cousin were so sober and anxious and pale." It is, like Thornton Wilder's *Heaven's My Destination*, a generous aberration, a visit to the underworld by a member of the last predominantly Wasp generation of writers, the last that conceived of itself as an aristocracy. Wilson's portrait of this one slum-child lives by her light, the "something so strong and instinctive that it could outlive the hurts and infections, the defilements, among which we lived." The fiction she inhabits, as its true princess, overtops the flanking Gothic vignettes (though "Ellen Terhune" has its authenticity, and the last story a wrenched pain) and makes plausible Wilson's boast that *Memoirs of Hecate County* was his favorite among his many books. His fiction, generally cluttered, savoring of the worked-up, of collected details moved by *force majeure* of the writer's mind, here finds a theme that moves *him*. Sex was his one way in, into the America to which his response, however much he wished it otherwise, was to reach for anaesthesia, whether found in books or bottles. Imogen, in this respect, is a better metaphor for America than Anna; her flamboyant costumes and greedy orgasms serve the same narcissism, reflect the same blank passion to succeed; in her richly, ironically particularized and overfurnished setting, she ends as a comic vision, empty but not unlovable, a gaudy suburban witch, in a land of Hecate Counties. No longer shocking, and never meant to be, this "memoir" remains, I think, a work of exemplary merit, still the most intelligent attempt by an American male to dramatize sexual behavior as a function of, rather than a suspension of, personality.

John Updike

John Updike's most recent book is *Picked-up Pieces* (Knopf).

Coming

W.W. Robson on Virginia Woolf
Millicent Bell on
Lady Ottoline Morrell

Correspondence

The Imperfect Mirror

To the editors:

Paul Johnson's "Barbarous Parliament" article (*TNR* Dec. 20) left me wondering why it was selected for publication since it provides no new information or analytical insights, in fact it sheds no light on the anti-Zionist actions of the UN. Mr. Johnson expounds sanctimonious polemic in the form of very old clichés which divide the world into noble, civilized and villainous, barbarian halves in classic TV western style with a pomposity and selfrighteousness reminiscent of Winston Churchill.

The last few paragraphs of the article, however, do provide an important insight, albeit, not one intended by the author. When he declares that " . . . the civilized powers (Western) have failed to uphold the standards of international behavior set by their forebears" and that the world is waiting " . . . (for) some positive sign that the Western countries are determined to revert to principles of law and international decency"; the author seems to have missed the point of developments since the end of World War II.

It is indeed ironic that he still fails to realize that the very lack of "principles of law and international decency" in the dealings of the imperial Western powers with the weak of the world generated the reaction which manifests itself in anti-Zionist resolutions. Zionism is only a convenient target for venting anger created by decades of callous disregard of decency and exploitation practiced by white men whose rhetoric sounded remarkably like Mr. Johnson's as they carried their proverbial burden.

I suppose Mr. Johnson is naive about this sort of thing, but what is wrong with *The New Republic*?

Sotiris Kitrilakis
Berkeley, California

To the editors:

Your article by Paul Johnson is the most accurate and comprehensive analysis of the United Nations that I have read to date. It reaches the highest standards of journalistic excellence for which *The New Republic* has always stood. Mr. Johnson not only gets to the heart of the most pressing problems of the day such as world terrorism and national political

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barbarism but also suggests feasible ways to reestablish our basic moral traditions.

This article should be mandatory reading for all national and international decision makers and anyone who considers himself knowledgeable on world affairs.

Lee Horvitz
Monroeville, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

Paul Johnson's emotional outburst against the United Nations cannot be faulted on moral grounds. His indignation at the anti-Zionist resolution is more than justified.

However the United Nations is neither a church, nor an institution guided by moral or ethical considerations. It is an intergovernmental organization, where, as in all political bodies, decisions are made on the basis of political interests.

It is also a mirror—however imperfect it may be—of the present state of the world. As Ambassador Yost recently wrote in *The Christian Science Monitor*, it would do no good, if we don't like the image, to break the mirror.

The United Nations could not be replaced, as Paul Johnson suggests, by a club of "civilized" countries, which would presumably agree from the outset on most issues and, at best, only duplicate NATO and OECD.

The main role of diplomacy has always been, and remains, to negotiate with neutrals and adversaries, and not only with friends. Picking up our marbles and leaving the UN, or reducing participation in its activities, would only benefit the enemies of the West, by giving them free rein.

It is equally counterproductive to throw around blanket accusations which, even if justified, alienate other delegates, instead of winning their support. Such bull in a china shop tactics, however popular with domestic public opinion may very well have lost the crucial procedural vote.

This does not imply surrender, quite to the contrary. The West has enormous potential strength, in terms of economic, political and military power. As recently suggested by Gaston Thorn, president of the UN General Assembly, it should use its bargaining power to the utmost and negotiate with the other power blocs within the United Nations, with tact and discretion, not excluding firmness. It should thus be able to obtain decisions more in line with its principles and interests. If such tactics were pursued, the United Nations would be likely to become a valuable instrument for international policy.

Paul Alpert, Chief (ret.)
Training Programmes
Technical Cooperation
UN Institute
for Training and Research

Better 'Fed' than Dead

To the editors:

We have read with considerable interest the article "Politics Against Government" by Paul Starr, published in the December 27, 1975 issue of *The New Republic*.

While we may not agree with all of his proposals nor his conclusion, the title of the article is in fact right on target with a point we have been making for many months past, namely, that a major theme of the coming national elections will be for incumbents and candidates alike to "run against the government" . . . not just "big government" but government as government. Elizabeth Drew, a Washington observer whose competence I am sure your editors respect as much as we do, recently noted in a television commentary that this is a dangerous ploy and comes close to an anarchical stance.

The already deeply eroded public confidence in government—and blindly against the dedicated career employees who have carried on the public business efficiently while a corrupt administration was immobilized at the top—can only be exacerbated as incumbents and candidates seek to outdo each other in the shrillness of their assaults on government and its institutions.

It will be our continuing effort to alert the electorate to the dangers in the irresponsible attacks on government by which so many candidates, including the President and his chief challenger, hope to either retain or ride into office in 1976.

We express the hope that *The New Republic* will take a further long searching look at this entire matter and, with its customary good sense, lay out the facts of life and government as they really exist in the last quarter of the 20th century . . . and as we prepare to mark the founding of our country.

N. T. Wolkomir
President
National Federation
of Federal Employees

Let the Record Speak. . .

To the editors:

Paul R. Wieck in detailing Hubert Humphrey's accomplishments ("Humphrey and Muskie: The Noncandidates," *TNR*, Dec. 20) does not mention his long-time excellent record on civil rights. Strangely this most important part of the Minnesotan's work seldom receives its merited emphasis. In fact had most blacks understood their rightful indebtedness to him, he probably would have defeated Nixon for the presidency in the close race of 1968.

Mr. Wieck stresses the long and wide executive experience of both Humphrey and Muskie, records which none of the announced and active candidates can

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match. The article confirms me in my belief that if the Democratic party and the people have good sense they will nominate and elect Hubert Humphrey for President and Edmund Muskie for Vice-President in 1976.

Eldon C. Hill
Oxford, Ohio

A Critical Exchange

To the editors:
Some Machiavellian instinct must have inspired you to assign *AMY—The World of Amy Lowell and the Imagist Movement* (*TNR*, Dec. 6, 1975) to a writer about to publish a book on Ezra Pound! I'm surprised that David Heymann could be as objective as he was in meting out the meager praise for my study that he did in his final paragraphs. It may interest Mr. Heymann to note that Clark Larrabee, a critic of estimable stature, in the Philadelphia *Inquirer* of Sun. Oct. 19th, stated that *AMY* is "unquestionably the definite biography of a too long neglected poet." Others, including Michael Hull of the Hartford *Times*, Sun. Oct. 26th, have hailed the work as the "definitive biography of Amy Lowell."

Of course no author expects all critics to agree, but when a critic resorts to misrepresentation, as Mr. Heymann does in several instances, I must protest. First and foremost, nowhere, but *nowhere* in my book do I claim that Amy Lowell had an effect on poets like Frost, Sandburg, Lawrence or Millay. In fact I make a point of emphasizing their independence, especially in the case of Frost, just as I did in my biography of him (*The Aim Was Song*). (Heymann knows well enough, I daresay, that Frost could not be swayed by Pound, either.) Nor could Millay be influenced during Amy's lifetime. I do emphasize Amy's generosity in praising and promoting these poets though she could not influence them. (It was, after all, her review in *The New Republic* that launched Robert Frost's fame in this country.) And she certainly did not "influence" Conrad Aiken; it is gross misrepresentation on Heymann's part to state that my book "touts" such a theory!

On the other hand, I stick to my guns that she *did* pave the way for later poets to develop their own styles, and she brought poetry to the fore. Finally I never claim Amy as a "major poet," except for her love poetry, which has been overlooked or dismissed, as in Damon. That is the true core of my book, and I am not trying to be sensational, only honest. Again, most reviews have praised my stand, so I might well dismiss Mr. Heymann's groundless assertions and accusations from the start—he surely knows that while the battle over free verse in England may have been won and I do not agree with him, it was hardly known in America before Amy took over. Her reign was short, but she *was* a major *force* in modern American poetry, whether one likes the poetry of today or not (and much of it I do not care for). And she was a poet capable of passionate and devoted love which manifested itself in the best of her work.

More than that I do not claim in my book, and I think your readers should be given the chance to learn the truth.

Jean Gould
New York, New York

In reply:
I don't see what my having written a book on Ezra Pound could possibly have to do with my suitability as a reviewer for a book on Amy Lowell. But if the author will rest easier let it be known that my book, *American Aristocracy: The Lives and Works of James Russell, Amy, and Robert Lowell*, is slated for publication next year by Scribner's.

As for Ms. Gould's book, it is (unfortunately) available for anyone who cares to read it. The would-be masochist will find ample evidence in support of my original commentary on it. As, for example, this enlightment on pp. 140-41: "Certainly those who tried to diminish her contribution to modern American poetry could have had no concept of Amy Lowell's psyche." Or on p. 354: "Unquestionably she was an outstanding influence 'in the American art of her time,' as Elizabeth Sergeant said." A number of false examples of these overwrought statements are scattered throughout the text and point as surely to the work of Frost, MacLeish, Lawrence, H.D., Sandburg, and Millay, as anyone else.

Furthermore I never said in my review that Ms. Gould wrote that Amy Lowell was a "major poet." I said that Ms. Gould "treats her as though she really were a major 20th-century literary persona." There is a difference, the term "as though" being the key phrase here.

C. David Heymann

One Flew Over. . .

To the editors:
I have not seen the film "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." However I must say that Stanley Kauffmann's review (*TNR*, Dec. 13) of that film is something less than a model of intelligent film reviewing.

We are "treated" to Kauffmann's judgments that "mental patients usually *are* socially incompetent" (whatever that means) and that the lobotomy to which the "egomaniac" protagonist McMurphy is subjected is "awful but hardly unmotivated." In addition Kauffmann tells us that he fears there is "an ethical danger in glorifying" McMurphy—and he characterizes the film "as a whole" as "warped, sentimental, possibly dangerous."

It is unfortunate for a film reviewer (whose ideas are probably the result of seeing too many films glorifying psychiatry) to believe that he has the right to pass judgement on a film as "possibly dangerous" simply because he disagrees with what he perceives to be its message. He ought to tell us to whom or what the film is "possibly dangerous."

Perhaps Kauffmann should go to the movies less frequently. He would do well to read some of this year's issues of *TNR*—especially those containing articles by Thomas Cottle or the recent one with Robert Coles' excellent review of Tillie Olsen's "Tell Me a Riddle."

June B. Costello
Buffalo, New York

In reply:
I'm puzzled.

If Miss Costello doesn't understand the phrase "socially incompetent," how can she object to it? (I think most people take it to mean unable to function in ordinary daily life.")

If she hasn't seen the film, how can she object to my saying that the lobotomy was "hardly unmotivated?"

If she read my review, how can she have missed what I meant by "possibly dangerous?" I said that the film is a "simplistic (and weary) allegory of the mental hospital as the world with the patients as the People struggling againt Authority, the medical staff"; that McMurphy is "literally an egomaniac"; and that I thought there was "some ethical danger in glorifying him," in making him a "symbol of resistance to tyranny."

Stanley Kauffmann

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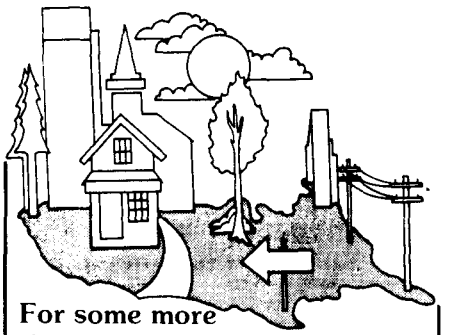

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- If you do not want the Selection – or you would like one of the Alternates or no book at all – simply indicate your decision on the reply form always enclosed with the *News* and mail it so we receive it by the date specified.
- If, because of late mail delivery of the *News*, you should receive a Selection without having had at least ten days to decide whether you want it, that Selection may be returned at Club expense.
- If you continue after your trial membership, you will earn at least one Book-Dividend® Credit for every Selection or Alternate you buy. These Credits enable you to acquire for your library a wide variety of books, called Book-Dividends, at astonishing savings – *at least 70% of publishers' list prices*. Under this unique system, more than 100 Book-Dividends will be available to choose from every year.

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